

صباحنا من الامل

Saturday April 20 1996

Abu Dhabi D 90	Hong Kong H 25	Qatar Q 100
Algeria L 120	India I 30	Romania R 100
Amman A 100	Iran I 30	Russia R 100
Ankara A 100	Italy I 30	Saudi Arabia S 100
Bahamas B 100	Japan J 30	Slovenia S 100
Bangkok B 100	Korea K 100	Spain S 100
Beijing B 100	Lebanon L 100	Sweden S 100
Berlin B 100	Malaysia M 100	Switzerland S 100
Bombay B 100	Maldives M 100	Taiwan T 100
Buenos Aires B 100	Malta M 100	Thailand T 100
Cardiff C 100	Mexico M 100	Turkey T 100
Cairo C 100	Morocco M 100	USA U 100
Canton C 100	Netherlands N 100	Zimbabwe Z 100
Cebu C 100	Norway N 100	
Dhaka D 100		
Dublin D 100		
Düsseldorf D 100		
Geneva G 100		
Helsinki H 100		
Hong Kong H 100		
Istanbul I 100		
Jakarta J 100		
Jeddah J 100		
London L 100		
Los Angeles L 100		
Lyons L 100		
Manila M 100		
Medan M 100		
Moscow M 100		
Mumbai M 100		
Osaka O 100		
Paris P 100		
Perth P 100		
Rangoon R 100		
Riyadh R 100		
Singapore S 100		
Sydney S 100		
Taipei T 100		
Tokyo T 100		
Yokohama Y 100		

# The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 46,532

Simon Hoggart on the Queen at 70

## Her Majesty's displeasure

Outlook page 13

Interview with Carol Thatcher

## Ironing it out with Maggie



Sport

## England call on Botham

Page 12

# Court stuns sports world as referee is blamed for crippling rugby injury

Duncan Campbell

**S**HOCK waves reverberated through the sporting world yesterday after a precedent-setting High Court ruling that held a rugby referee responsible for the paralysis of a player through his failure to control a match.

In the first ruling of its kind, the player, Ben Smoldon — who has been a tetraplegic since being injured during a match in 1991 —

won his case against the match referee, Michael Nolan.

Mr Smoldon went to court seeking £1 million in damages. The final sum he will receive is to be assessed by the court at a later date.

An action against the opposing team's tight-head prop, Thomas Whitworth, failed. Mr Smoldon had accused him of causing the accident by collapsing scrums deliberately.

Referees' associations

covering all leading sports were stunned by the decision and were yesterday seeking legal advice. The ruling could have ramifications for all levels of sport.

One cricket umpire described the issue as a minefield, and other referees said it could lead to people refusing to officiate in games without legal immunity.

Mr Smoldon, from Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands — a promising player who had represented his county

as a hooker at under-19 level — was injured at the age of 17 when a scrum collapsed during a game between Sutton Coldfield and Burton on Trent Colts.

He claimed that Mr Nolan, who was backed by the Rugby Football Union, did not keep proper control of the game and that his injury was a result of this failure.

The court heard earlier that a linesman had warned Mr Nolan that those in the front row of the

scrum could be hurt if action was not taken. Mr Nolan did not recall this.

Mr Nolan, aged 64, from Tamworth, Staffordshire, an army cadet force administrator, said he did not see any deliberate unlawful behaviour in the scrum which led to the injury. Two players had been sent off, but the game had not been excessively violent. He recalled about eight collapsed scrums, not the 25 alleged in court.

Mr Justice Curtis agreed

that Mr Nolan had fallen below the standard of a reasonably competent referee.

"In important respects, relating to the scrum, he failed to exercise reasonable care and skill in the prevention of collapses by sufficient instruction to the front rows and in the use of the 'touch, touch, pause and engage' rule, thereby reducing the impact of the engagement to an acceptable level," said the judge.

Mr Smoldon said after

the decision: "I am relieved that the judge has found that I am blameless and found I did not contribute to my accident."

He added that he did not want to discourage anyone from playing rugby.

Mr Nolan's solicitors, Davis Arnold Cooper, indicated that he may appeal against the decision.

"Our client is deeply disappointed by the decision," they said. "Whilst each case of this nature turns on its own particular facts, the

implication which this decision has for refereeing in sport in general needs to be carefully considered."

Spokesmen for the Rugby Football Union and Football Association referees would not comment, saying they had not yet studied the transcript of the case, but the decision has already reverberated around the sporting world. There are implications for cricket umpires, football referees and boxing referees who do not intervene early enough.

# Israel seeks rescue by US

Derek Brown in Jerusalem, David Hirst in Beirut and Jonathan Freedland in Washington

**I**SRAELI leaders were desperately hoping last night that United States-led diplomacy would come to their rescue at the weekend to produce a face-saving formula allowing them to suspend their ill-fated assault on Lebanon.

Hostilities continued yesterday between Israeli forces and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah, but with diplomatic initiatives gathering pace, hopes of a ceasefire rose.

Asked if an agreement to end hostilities could come within 24 to 48 hours, the Israeli prime minister, Shimon Peres, told Israeli television: "It's possible; it's not certain, but there is a chance."

The Syrian foreign minister, Farouq al-Shara, said he hoped a ceasefire would be arranged "within hours and not days", while Lebanon's prime minister, Rafiq Hariri, said he, too, was optimistic, but added that it would probably take "four to five days".

The foreign ministers of the US, Russia, France and Italy are to meet in Damascus today after a call by the Group of Seven major industrial countries and Moscow for an immediate ceasefire in south Lebanon.

The four are to try to coordinate the implementation of any ceasefire.

"The heavy talk of a early end to the bloodshed reflects desperation rather than optimism. Israel is anxious to extricate itself from international opprobrium after Thursday's 'accidental' shelling of a United Nations base crammed with refugees."

Five shells landed in the compound, manned by Fijian troops of the UN military force in Lebanon. Until, killing 101 civilians and wounding scores.

But hope may be premature. There still seems to be a wide gap between the Syrian, Lebanese and Hezbollah notions of a ceasefire and the Israeli one.

Both Mr Hariri and the Hezbollah have made it clear that

the conditions which the Israelis were laying down, with US endorsement in the early stages of their "Grapes of Wrath" operation in Lebanon — amounting to the complete neutralisation of Hezbollah — remain out of the question. Both insist on a virtual return to the status quo ante — the US-brokered "understanding" that ended the last big flare-up in July 1993.

Mr Hariri said any ceasefire could not cover Hezbollah operations against Israeli troops in occupied south Lebanon. Nor could the Lebanese government disarm Hezbollah so long as the Israelis remained in occupation in the south. That would amount to political suicide, he said.

A Hezbollah official stressed the need to return to the 1993 accord. Otherwise, "our rockets will be the best reply," he said. He said Hezbollah's fighting capabilities had hardly been touched.

Israeli aircraft and artillery hit targets in Lebanon yesterday, though at diminished intensity, while Hezbollah fighters fired more Katyusha rockets into northern Israel.

No serious injuries were reported in Israel. But Hezbollah admitted to their first casualties in the nine-day conflict — three men killed in an air raid in the south.

Thursday's massacre has left the Clinton administration in an acutely awkward position. Washington had previously avoided all criticism of Operation Grapes of Wrath, with President Clinton eager to maintain his supposed popularity among Jewish voters. The president is also anxious not to undermine Mr Peres, who faces a close election contest in Israel next month.

But since the massacre, Mr Clinton has adjusted his position, calling for a ceasefire from "all parties".

"All sides clearly want one," a US source said yesterday, adding that Warren Christopher, the US secretary of state who is due in Damascus today, will not leave the region until a ceasefire is agreed.

Lebanon attack, page 6; No pressure, no peace, page 14; Israel's plea, page 19

# Major's mask of neutrality slips as Russia's Communist frontrunner delivers rebuff



**J**OHAN MAJOR and President Boris Yeltsin (above) go through a tense reception yesterday, after the Prime Minister's unhappy trip continued with a more subtle hint to keep out of Russia's internal affairs delivered during a tense meeting with the Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, writes Andy McSmith in Moscow.

The rebuff undermined Mr Major's avowed intention to stay neutral in the Russian presidential election in June, for which Mr Zyuganov is the frontrunner.

It is the second time in his brief east European trip that the Prime Minister's own words have plunged him in into unexpected controversy.

On Wednesday, during the flight to Prague, he denounced

a war of words within the Conservative Party when he remarked that it would be "reckless and silly" to make radical cuts in public spending — a comment which John Redwood, who challenged Mr Major last year for the party leadership, took as a personal attack.

The Prime Minister met Mr Zyuganov at a reception in the British embassy, to which

a range of Russian party and faction leaders were invited.

He later said: "Mr Zyuganov expressed what he was about — what he saw as the priorities in this country. Self-evidently, he does not believe these priorities concern anyone elsewhere."

The Prime Minister is in Moscow for two days for the Group of Eight (G8) summit of the world's big economies.

During his one-hour talks with Mr Yeltsin, he promised an extra £50 million for Britain's "know-how fund" to help Russia's transition to capitalism.

Mr Major declined to say if he was backing the Yeltsin campaign, saying: "It is not for anyone outside Russia to determine who should be president of Russia."

# Farmer unmoved by £10m windfall

Recluse who spends his days fattening calves for market says inheritance of brewing fortune will not change his life

Sarah Roseley

**A** RECLUSIVE farmer, who rarely does more than pass the time of day with villagers who have lived alongside him for 30 years, became one of the country's most eligible bachelors yesterday on inheriting nearly £10 million.

But the odds on Richard Oatley, aged 58, rushing into marriage or even popping a few champagne corks look thin. He would continue to work on the farm he loved, he said yesterday. "I couldn't walk away and leave the animals. They need to be cared for. But I don't want to give it up anyway."

Mr Oatley was left £9,998,787, mostly in stocks and shares, by the aunt who brought him up from the age of seven. Ida Mand Russell, who died last Octo-



ber aged 88, had been the housekeeper, then wife, then widow of a brewing magnate, Percy Fussell.

He says he has no idea why he was brought up by the brewing family in the Somerset village of Rode. His own parents died, he said, within the last 25 years. "Ida and Percy treated me well and looked after me like I was their own son."

"Ida died after she failed to recover from a hip replacement operation. I miss her dearly. I loved her an awful lot."

Some of the millions were realised when the Fussell family's Cross Keys brewery, together with 56 pubs owned by the family, were sold to Bass in 1982.

Mr Oatley claimed that his inheritance was "a tremendous surprise", but would make no difference to him. He did not intend to

trade up from his D-registered Ford Sapphire.

"I suppose it's a bit like winning the lottery, but I'll still carry on with the farm and I might even still play the lottery once in a while," he said.

"I don't feel like a millionaire. If I wake up in the morning and it's fine I feel good, and if it's not I don't. That will never change."

He spends his days fattening calves for market with the help of one part-time worker. BSE had made life difficult, he said, but things were getting better.

Opinion in the village was that little would alter in the life of their neighbour. "I can't see this changing him. He's a very quiet, unassuming man," said one.

And there is no resentment from another branch of the family who still live in Rode. Barbara Wheeler, daughter of Henry Fussell, said little of the brewing profits had come their way, but it was just one of those things.

"Although Ida's name was Fussell she only had maternal connections with the family and we saw her rarely. She married my uncle after 21 years of being his house-keeper and looked after him well when he was ill."

Richard, she said, "keeps himself to himself and if we meet we have little conversation."

And that is how it looks likely to remain.

# Prague Writers' Festival 1996

This year the Prague Writers' Festival, directed by Michael March, will once again showcase a selection of fine authors from around the world. Meet them at the Viola Theatre, Narodni 7, (nearest metro Narodni) from May 9-11. For more details call: 44 171 7134133

- Thursday May 9**
  - Sylva Fischerová - Czech Republic
  - Andrzej Sosnowski - Poland
  - Evelyn Schlegel - Austria
  - Nuno Júdice - Portugal
- Friday May 10**
  - Paul Durcan - Ireland
  - John F. Deane - Ireland
  - James Keiman - Scotland
  - R.S. Thomas - Wales
- Saturday May 11**
  - Ewald Murrer - Czech Republic
  - Jim Barnes - USA
  - Abdullah al-Udhari - Yemen
  - Natan Zach - Israel

## Inside Britain

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## World News

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## Sport

...the...  
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Letters 16; Comment 14  
Obituaries 20  
Radio and TV 2  
Outlook  
Money Guardian 21



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# Chechenia mars Russian summit of world leaders

David Hearst in Moscow

**P**RESIDENT Boris Yeltsin's plan to boost his reelection campaign with high level meetings with world leaders in Moscow for a nuclear summit, was floundering yesterday as Russia registered its shock at its army's latest military disasters in Chechenia, and parliament declared a day of mourning.

To add to Mr Yeltsin's problems, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) threatened to withhold this month's tranche of \$340 million (about £226 million) worth of aid unless Russia keeps a promise to halve export tax on oil. The IMF wants Mr Yeltsin to fund from within the annual budget his populist election pledges to increase public spending.

The IMF's threat drew a heavy promise from Sergei Dubinin, the chairman of the central bank, that the decree halving oil export tax would be signed.

But the war in Chechenia cast the deepest shadow. The defence minister, General Pavel Grachev, offered to resign before a parliament stunned by the news of a rebel attack on a federal motorcade that left 53 soldiers dead and 52 wounded. Six more soldiers died yesterday in a clash with Chechen rebels.

Gen Grachev said that 122 Russian soldiers had been killed since Mr Yeltsin declared a unilateral ceasefire two weeks ago.

Mr Yeltsin offered condolences to the families of the dead yesterday, but it was clear that the army was in a state of revolt about his peace plan, which is now in tatters.

The proposed mediator, Tatarstan's leader, Mintimer Shaimiyev, said he would not start talks with the separatist leader, Dzhokhar Dudaev, until fighting stopped.

Foreign leaders arriving for today's one-day summit on nuclear issues tried hard to back the Russian president without appearing to intervene in domestic politics.

The summit will tackle issues of nuclear security and safety.

When Mr Choy was last month restored to the register by another committee, only his convictions were raised.

He said: "Since I have committed the crime, I have had 13 years to reflect on my behaviour and I felt that I was being unprofessional at the time, what I did was wrong and I abused my trust and my position."

An RCN spokeswoman said: "We have a role as a trade union to protect our members and make sure they have a fair hearing. We also have a role as a professional body and there is a tension between these roles."

"We judge every issue as it comes up and we believe now that Mr Choy should not be reinstated."

# Myth of Jackie O falls under hammer

Edward Helmore in New York

**F**ORTY THOUSAND people are expected to make the pilgrimage to Sotheby's in New York in the next four days to view what may be the sale of the century for some 5,000 items belonging to the late Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

Previewers have been chosen by lottery from among 78,000 purchasers of the \$80 (£60) catalogue, with the lucky ones being admitted only for one hour.

For Americans, the sale is much more than an estate sale of a society lady's furniture, books, pictures and trinkets. It is the possessions of Jackie O that have acquired a talismanic power that promises to bestow on their new owner the aura of grace that she was felt to have had.

It has become an auction of superstition. Collectors gush about the sale of America's lost innocence, and the United States coming to terms with Jackie O's departure.

"For America, she was such a psychological figure, David Redden, vice-president of Sotheby's in New York, said. "You have to understand this viscerally, and why she so inspired with her dignity under such tragic circumstances."

Most of the objects are in themselves unremarkable. Coolly impersonal, they give little away. Mr Redden said: "To look at this as a significant collection of objects is to miss the point. This is the material with which Mrs Onassis lived. That is why it has so much meaning."

Sotheby's has received 30,000 advance bids, and expects that the 1,302 lots will go for well above the estimates.

When the auction begins in earnest on Tuesday, there will be 50 people handling telephone bids, and extra staff to cope with a crush of spectators. Perhaps the most sentimental objects are a triple string of fake pearls, which JFK junior can be seen grabbing for as a child in a photograph from 1958 - estimated at only \$500-\$700; one of John Kennedy's rocking chairs; a couple of his golf bags and a light which once stood in the White House sitting room.

Robert Lacey, the biographer of Britain's royal family, said: "It is a charming collection in its own right, but it is impossible to separate the objects from their owner."



John Kennedy's rocking chair and golf clubs at an auction preview PHOTOGRAPH: PETER MORGAN

# 'Rapist nurse' backed by RCN

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

**T**HE Royal College of Nursing, which is seeking a judicial review of a decision to restore a convicted rapist to the nurses' register, tried to stop him being struck off in the first place.

The RCN's apparently ambivalent stance, which it admits reflects the tensions of its dual role as trade union and professional association, emerged through scrutiny of the official transcript of the 1988 hearing at which Yusef Hoo Choy was struck off. The transcript also reveals that Mr Choy had not only been convicted of raping a former patient, and of giving a patient a sedative in order to have sex with her, but had been investigated by police over two other sex incidents. One alleged incident was said by police to have involved a patient with a learning disability, the other an alleged indecent assault on a woman colleague.

Police said that when interviewed, Mr Choy had described himself as "a randy chiatric nurse, was first convicted in 1973 of stealing a sedative and administering it to a woman patient to enable the other an alleged intercourse with her. He was given two years' probation.

As a result of that conviction, the former General Nursing Council placed Mr Choy on a year's "postponed judgment", after which he was cautioned but allowed to remain on the register. The further conviction was in 1984. Mr Choy was found to have visited the home of a woman patient. On the pretext of examining her, he took her to her bedroom and raped her. He was sentenced to two years' jail, 12 months of which was suspended.

When Mr Choy was last month restored to the register by another committee, only his convictions were raised.

He said: "Since I have committed the crime, I have had 13 years to reflect on my behaviour and I felt that I was being unprofessional at the time, what I did was wrong and I abused my trust and my position."

An RCN spokeswoman said: "We have a role as a trade union to protect our members and make sure they have a fair hearing. We also have a role as a professional body and there is a tension between these roles."

"We judge every issue as it comes up and we believe now that Mr Choy should not be reinstated."

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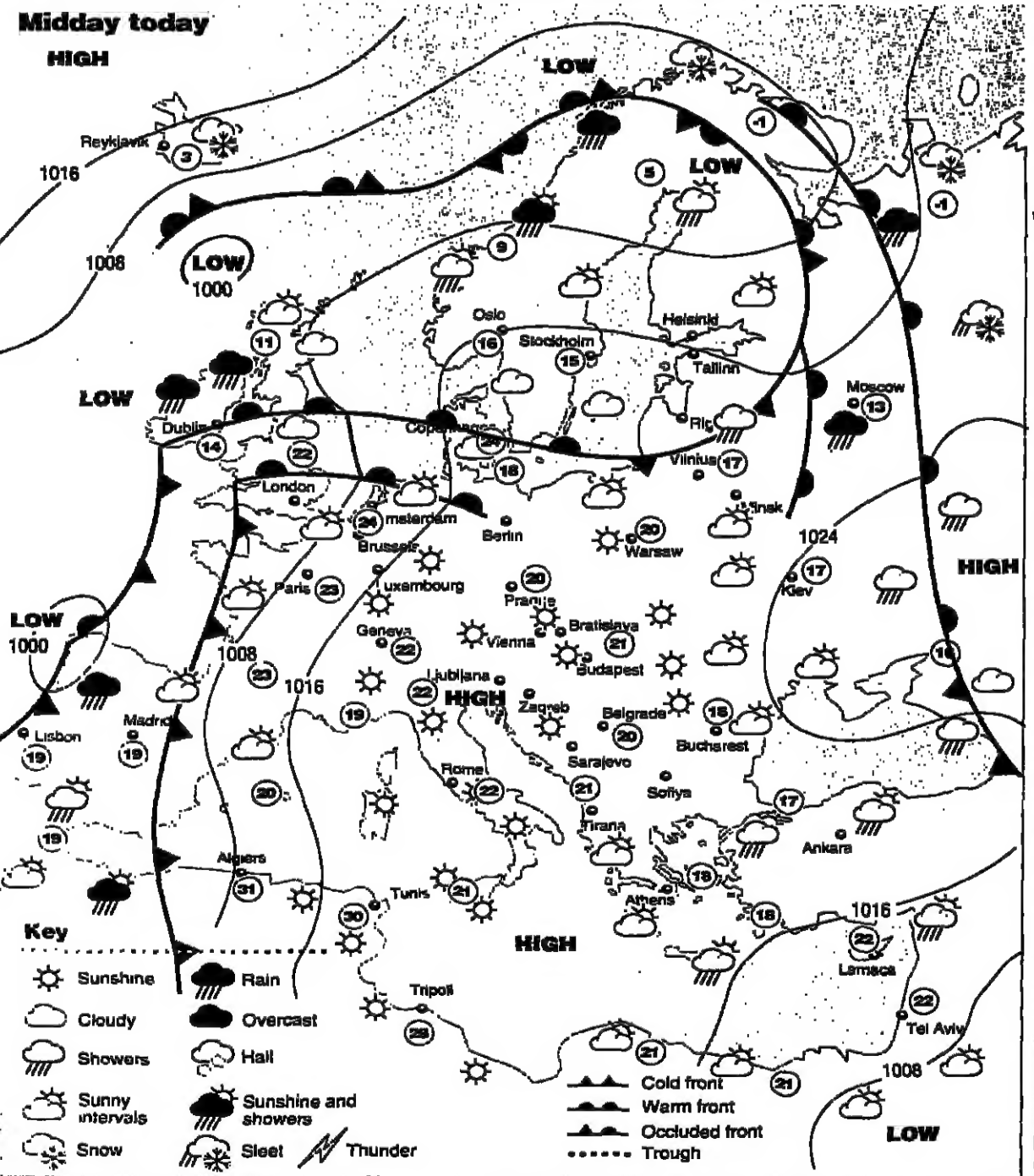
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'We have a role as a trade union to protect our members and make sure they have a fair hearing.'

# The weather in Europe



# Television and radio - Saturday

**BBC 1**  
8.00am News, 8.30am News, 9.00am News, 9.30am News, 10.00am News, 10.30am News, 11.00am News, 11.30am News, 12.00pm News, 1.00pm News, 1.30pm News, 2.00pm News, 2.30pm News, 3.00pm News, 3.30pm News, 4.00pm News, 4.30pm News, 5.00pm News, 5.30pm News, 6.00pm News, 6.30pm News, 7.00pm News, 7.30pm News, 8.00pm News, 8.30pm News, 9.00pm News, 9.30pm News, 10.00pm News, 10.30pm News, 11.00pm News, 11.30pm News, 12.00am News.

**BBC 2**  
7.00am Open University One Small Step - 7.25 Maths, 7.30 Health Viewing Aid, 7.45 The Big Bang Theory, 8.00 The Big Bang Theory, 8.15 The Big Bang Theory, 8.30 The Big Bang Theory, 8.45 The Big Bang Theory, 9.00 The Big Bang Theory, 9.15 The Big Bang Theory, 9.30 The Big Bang Theory, 9.45 The Big Bang Theory, 10.00 The Big Bang Theory, 10.15 The Big Bang Theory, 10.30 The Big Bang Theory, 10.45 The Big Bang Theory, 11.00 The Big Bang Theory, 11.15 The Big Bang Theory, 11.30 The Big Bang Theory, 11.45 The Big Bang Theory, 12.00 The Big Bang Theory.

**BBC 3**  
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**BBC 8**  
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**BBC 10**  
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Pythons past... but Chapman, Idle, Gilliam, Jones, Cleeve and Palin have enjoyed mixed fortunes since the '70s

# Kline and fall of Death Fish 2

James Melke

FIRST it was called Death Fish 2. Now Americans, who have always valued film stars above helpless dumb animals and fish, are threatening to make it The Flop After Wanda.

The release of Fierce Creatures, the final title of the movie which reunites the stars of A Fish Called Wanda, has been delayed indefinitely following the thumbs down from preview audiences in the US.

Fielding the same quartet that made the 1988 jewel-belt comedy — upright Brits John Cleese and Michael Palin and upstart Yanks Jamie Lee Curtis and Kevin Kline — for another culture-clash caper has not proved enough.

## Twenty years of Python films

- 1976 **Monty Python and the Holy Grail**  
Gilliam, Palin, Cleeve, Idle, Chapman, Jones  
Immensely popular
- 1979 **The Life of Brian**  
Gilliam, Palin, Cleeve, Idle, Chapman, Jones  
Immensely popular
- 1980 **Time Bandits**  
Gilliam, Palin, Cleeve  
Whimsy but patchy
- 1985 **Brazil**  
Gilliam, Palin  
Cult success, financial flop
- 1986 **Clockwise**  
Cleeve  
Well received
- 1988 **A Fish Called Wanda**  
Palin, Cleeve, Kline, Curtis  
Stomping success
- 1989 **The Adventures of Baron Munchausen**  
Gilliam, Idle  
Complete flop
- 1991 **American Friends**  
Palin  
Pretty successful
- 1991 **Fisher King**  
Gilliam  
Pretty successful
- 1993 **Splitting Heirs**  
Idle, Cleeve  
Complete flop
- 1995 **Twelve Monkeys**  
Gilliam  
Commercial success



audiences liked the picture, loved the picture, but didn't like the idea of Kline's character being bumped off.

\$200 million worldwide, was loved by the Americans and was probably the most successful British comedy before Four Weddings and a Funeral, but it also needed rewriting.

cord of the Python team since their halcyon days. Cleeve (Fawcett Towers and Clockwise) has had more ups than downs — although low points included a pre-Wanda coupling with Kline in the odd 1985 western Silverado, and his acting partnership with Eric Idle in the awful Splitting Heirs, a baby mix-up comedy also directed by Robert Young.

## Ruling ends attempt to extend Crown copyright over Blake's story

# Heseltine shocked after spy wins royalties battle

Richard Norton-Taylor

THE Government suffered a humiliating defeat in the High Court yesterday when Sir Richard Scott dismissed its attempt to seize £30,000 owed to George Blake, the Soviet agent, for his memoirs.

Richard Scott ruled that the Government's claim that Blake — who lives in Moscow — could not gain financially from writing anything about his work as a spy amounted to "an interference with his rights of free expression".

His judgment, described by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, as a "depressing shock", demolished what in effect was a backdoor attempt to bolster official secrecy by extending Crown copyright to cover anything published without authority by former civil servants, armed forces personnel, and members of the intelligence services.

He said his conclusion that there was no evidence that Blake had abused his position as a former MI6 agent might seem strange given Blake's status as a self-confessed traitor. But the Government had based its case "on what was far too broad a statement of the duty owed by ex-members of intelligence and security agencies".

## Bad news for Tories as 'good news' paper gets it wrong

Sue Quinn

THE launch of the Conservative Party's "good news" tabloid newspaper Look! has proved anything but uplifting after two supposed Tory fans featured in its pages denied they supported the Government.

Tory Party chairman Brian Mawhinney, who launched the publication, was accused of blundering when a successful small businessman profiled in the paper revealed he would probably vote Labour at the next election.

not believe that and I did not say that. My current record and on their achievements I certainly couldn't vote Conservative. They don't deserve it."

Ballet School, the Look! article failed to mention that her parents had to fund her for the next three years.

**"My overriding memory is of nannies whispering 'Shhh, mummy's working,' says Carol grimly, picking at an enormous marbled ring, the size of a small clenched fist. "My overriding memory is thinking you have to slog your guts out to get to the top."**

Joanna Coles

Outlook page 17

## Haemophiliacs force HIV pay-outs

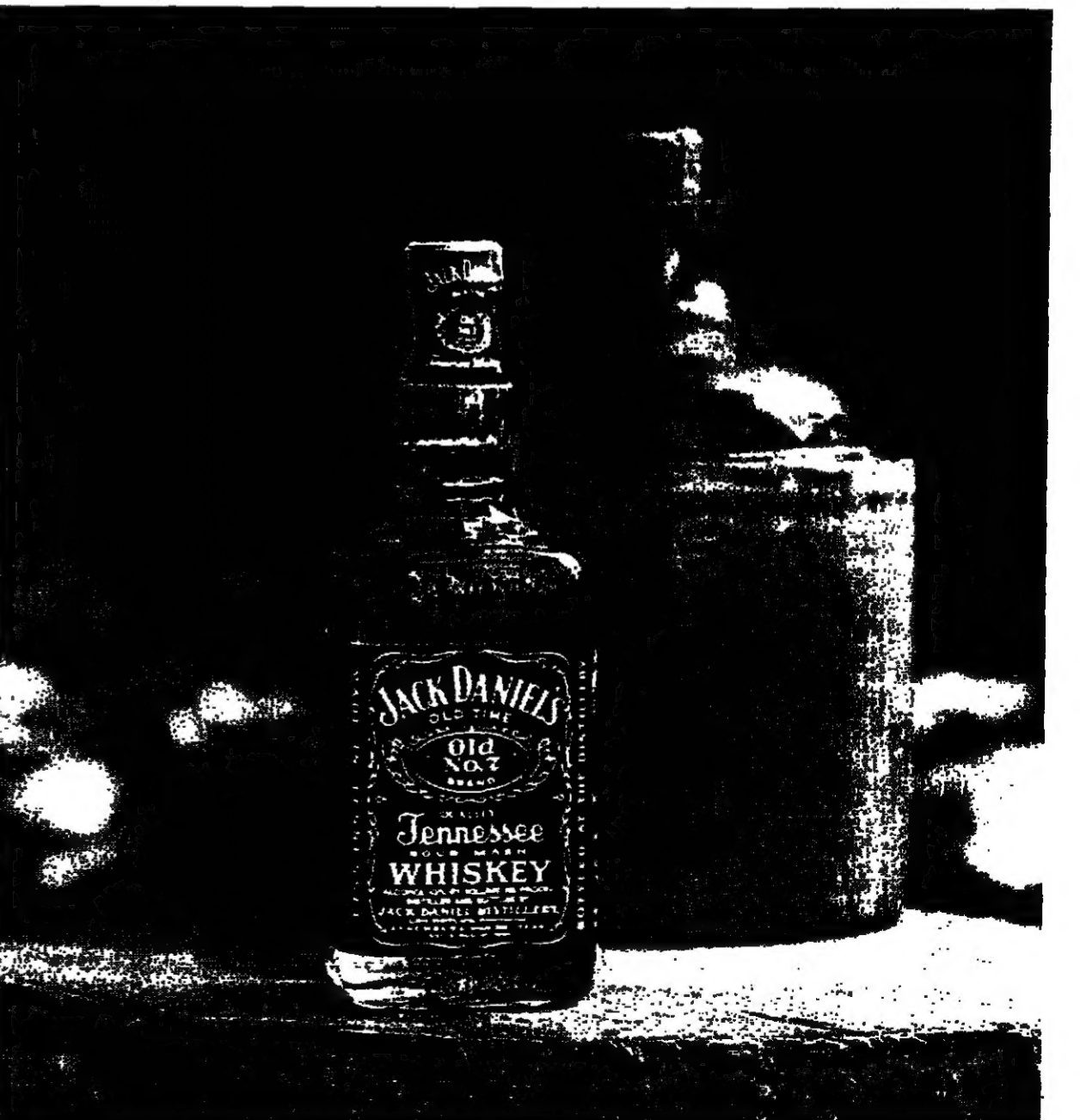
Lisa Buckingham and Simon Beavin

CAMPAIGNERS for United States haemophiliacs infected with the HIV virus from tainted blood products yesterday forced four big drug companies to offer a \$640 million (£27 million) settlement after 10 years of furious legal action.

deal in Japan, where payments totalled \$428,000 for each victim, plus \$1,400 a month for life.

It was unlikely that the US offer would rekindle legal actions in Britain.

Corey Dubin, head of the "Committee of 10,000" which represents the US plaintiffs, acknowledged that the firms had for the first time made a "reasonable offer".



If you'd like to know more about our unique whiskey, write to us for a free booklet at the Jack Daniel Distillery, Lynchburg, Tennessee USA.

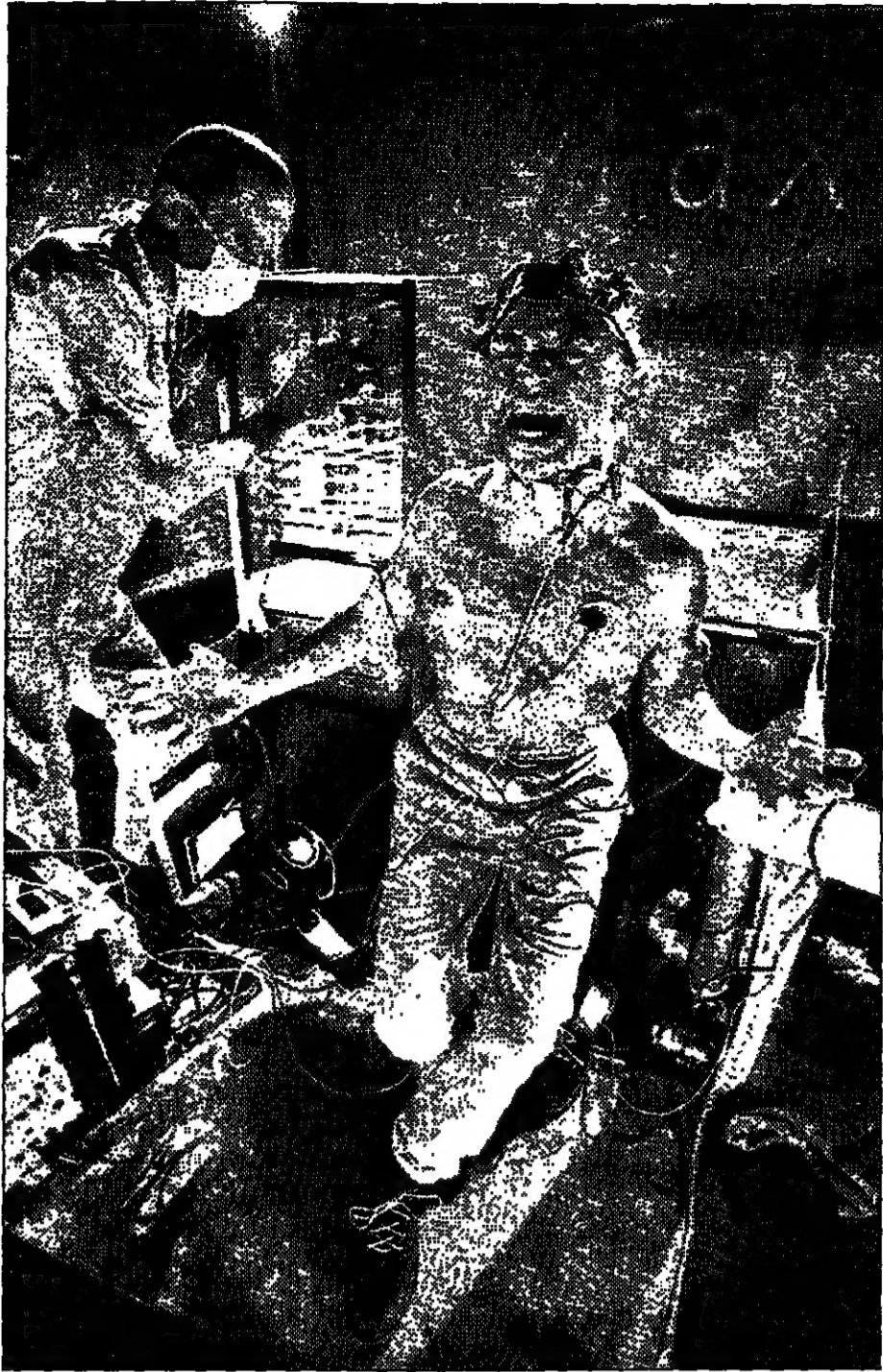
130 YEARS AGO, this is where you'd go for a sip of Tennessee Whiskey.

If you were in the market for good whiskey back in 1866, you'd head right for the woods near Lynchburg, Tennessee. Lay your money down and Jack Newton Daniel himself would hand over a jug of his best.



JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY





Shared pain... Arthritis sufferer Graham Cunningham rehearses with Ed King for Pain, charting his 24-year struggle, at the Arches, Glasgow. The machinery will broadcast his neurological and other functions to the audience. PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MACLEOD

### Minister rejects call for new death verdict

David Pallister

THE Government has ruled out any changes in the mandatory life sentence for murder following an 18-month review prompted by the case of Private Lee Clegg. A number of senior judges have argued for an intermediary verdict between murder and manslaughter in cases where a defendant kills in self-defence or to prevent a crime. Clegg was convicted of the murder of a Belfast joyrider in 1981 and lost two appeals. The Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, Sir Brian Hutton, and the House of Lords expressed concern at the appeals that the judiciary had no option but to find Clegg guilty of murder and uphold the mandatory life

sentences. Clegg was released on licence last July after a controversial decision by the Life Sentence Review Board of Northern Ireland that he posed no risk to the public. He has been allowed to remain in the army. The move provoked violent demonstrations in republican areas of Belfast and Derry and led to the protest resignation from the review board of Brieghe Gadd, chief probation officer in the province. The Government's decision was given yesterday by David Maclean, the Home Office minister, in a parliamentary answer to Sir Ivan Lawrence, the Tory MP for Burton. Mr Maclean said the review body, with officials from six departments, had considered, among other things, whether there should be a change in the law for the police and

members of the armed forces. It concluded that special provision for the police and soldiers would be objectionable in principle and difficult to achieve in practice. It recommended a verdict of manslaughter where a defendant had over-reacted and used unreasonable force, but the Government decided that would not "improve either the certainty or the quality of the criminal law". Juries would have had to assess whether a defendant honestly believed that the level of force used was justified. If they agreed with the defendant's account, then a manslaughter verdict would have to be returned no matter how unreasonable the force. "We do not believe that this would be a satisfactory position," Mr Maclean said.

## Boss who raised millions for the Conservatives delivers an unexpected blow to Major

# Stronger unions the best guard against EU, says McAlpine

Michael White  
Political Editor

JOHN Major sustained an unexpected body blow from an unlikely quarter yesterday when Lord McAlpine of West Green — house builder, dilettante, and legendary Tory fund-raiser — announced that Britain's best defence against the European Union might be its bloody-minded and patriotic trades unions. The multi-millionaire, who raised millions to help Lady Thatcher cripple union power in the 1980s, does not say she was wrong. "But now we need our trade union movement's muscle to protect our interests" against "bureaucrat-infested Brussels". Lord McAlpine, who sold his share of the family building firm, made his point in the Daily Express, and amplified it on Radio 4's World at One, during a visit to London from Venice where he lives in a tax exile's splendour at what he sometimes calls the "Tower Hamlets end" of the Grand Canal.

He said Britain was engaged in "the subtlest of economic wars" with its EU partners, and traditional barriers — the monarchy, the House of Lords, and the Bank of England among them — to overbearing governments and foreign diktat were being eroded. "Ask yourself, would the unions that represent French farm-workers have allowed Europe to walk all over the French beef industry? There's not a chance," he told Express readers. Armed with "a new philosophy and a new style" the unions could emerge to protect the people they represented, not least by seeing off

the disastrous impact, the EU's social chapter and single currency projects were bound to have on Britain's reviving economic fortunes. Labour's stance on both was pathetic. Farmers' unions should take a tougher stance against the EU's worldwide ban on British beef exports, he said on Radio 4. "They've been treated appallingly over the last few weeks. That wouldn't have happened in France. We need to demonstrate to Europe that some of the things they're doing are immensely unpopular in this country." As usual with Lord McAlpine, who first met Margaret Thatcher when they both worked in the pro-European campaign during the 1976 referendum, there is an idiosyncratic twist and old scores to be settled. Since leaving politics in the Major era he has become increasingly out-

spoken and is now backing the even-richer exile, James Goldsmith, in his anti-European referendum campaign. That does not prevent explaining that the patriotism of the British working class was "sold down the river in the 1970s by its political masters" — a coded reference to Sir Edward Heath and Harold Wilson. Lord McAlpine was asked if he had changed his mind since saying the Tories might benefit from a period in opposition. "Not really. We've got the second worst by-election result since the war." "It seems to me like when you watch a Western — you have these herds of cattle and there's a flash of lightning and the cattle all get edgy and someone drops a frying pan and the whole lot stampedes off in a thousand different directions. I think that's the Conservative Party."



Lord McAlpine: 'Now we need union muscle'

## Major calls EU premiers for beef crisis talks

THE Prime Minister yesterday condemned the European Union ban on British beef exports as "unjustified" and called for a speedy end to the crisis at midnight talks with four EU heads of state in Moscow. John Major, who was attending the summit on nuclear safety in the Russian capital, invited the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, EU Commission president, Jacques Santer, French president, Jacques Chirac and Italian premier, Lamberto Dini to talks at the British embassy. Mr Major told reporters it would be "quite

astonishing" not to discuss the problem in Moscow, although the EU Agriculture Commissioner was not there. He said it was a chance to make clear British concern, and "I will do that very clearly and very crisply". He did not hold out much prospect of a breakthrough in the logjam, but said the fact that scientists, the World Health Organisation, and the EU Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischer had all said British beef was safe suggests to me there is no logic in a continuing ban on British beef. But that is not a matter that can be lifted by

the people meeting here. What we can do is to impress on them the strength of feeling in the United Kingdom and the extent to which we feel it is an unreasonable decision that has been reached and that it is highly desirable that the ban is lifted as speedily as it can be." Mr Major is angry at the announcement by Mr Fischer and Mr Santer that they are still eating British beef, despite imposing the worldwide ban on its sale a month ago. These disclosures prompted him to announce Britain will be challenging the ruling in the European

Court of Justice. The EU insists the order is legal and that taking the matter through the courts will be an extremely lengthy process. Meanwhile the Government said yesterday it was banning the sale and use of meat and bone meal as fertiliser on agricultural land to prevent the spread of BSE — "mad cow" disease — which scientists fear could be linked to the human equivalent CJD. The ban will be effective today, and follows a recommendation of the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) that meat and bone meal from mammals

should be prohibited where there might be a risk of ruminant animals ingesting them. The Ministry of Agriculture said there was no restriction on the use of meat and bone meal fertilisers in private gardens. One of the winners of this year's Queen's Awards for export achievement has gone to a firm which markets beef and offal to customers around the world, Eurostock Meat Marketing, of Newry, County Down, is one of four firms in Northern Ireland to have shown significant growth. The awards were determined before the beef crisis.

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Home Secretary suffers latest in series of embarrassing rebukes

# Howard wrong to reject asylum pleas, say judges

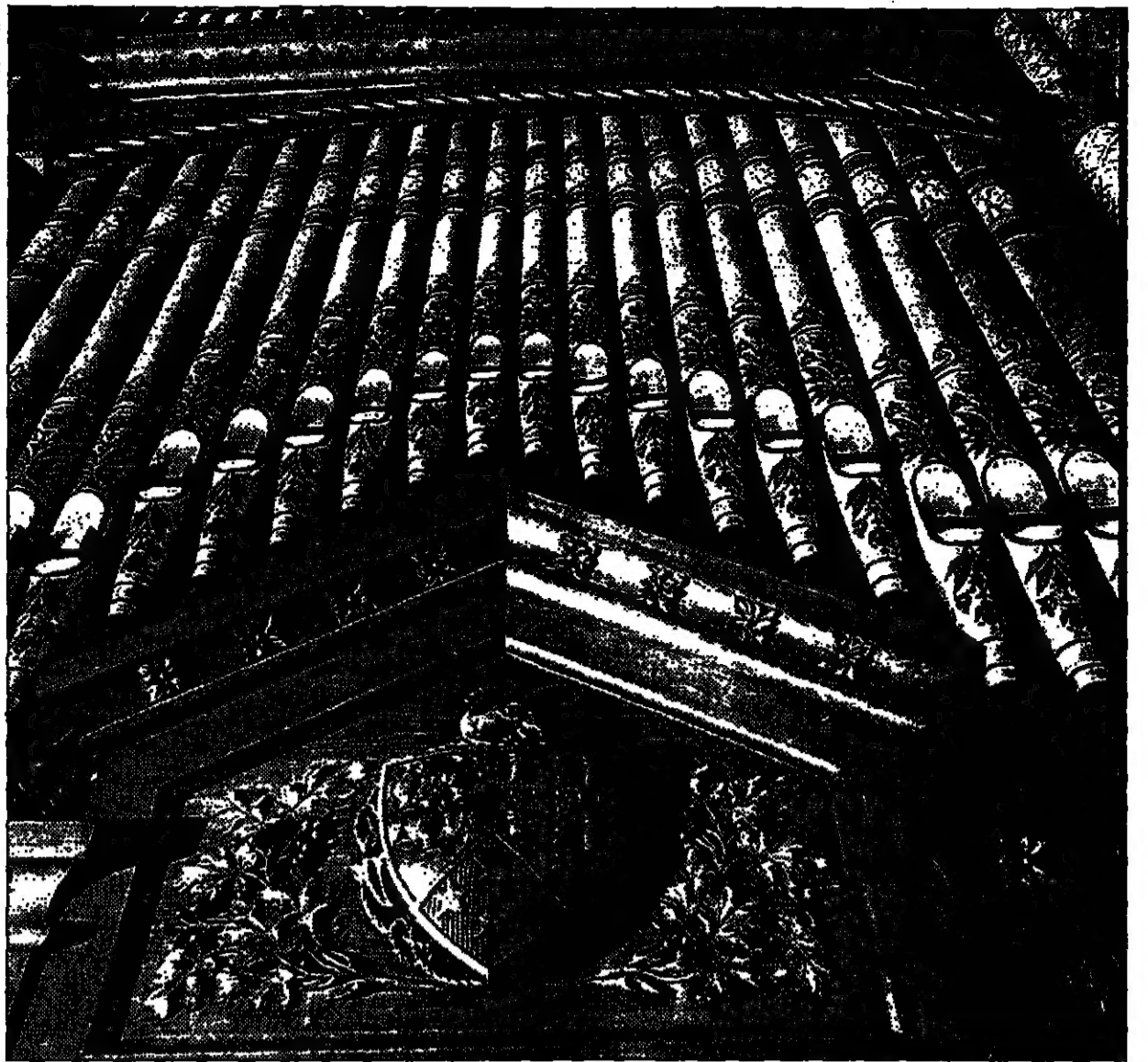
Barbie Duthie

**T**HE Home Secretary wrongly rejected a clutch of asylum applications, two High Court judges ruled yesterday. The latest in a series of embarrassing court rebukes for Michael Howard came days after the Government's climb-down over the deportation of the Saudi dissident Mohammed al-Mas'ari.

Lawyers said yesterday's rulings could have important implications for hundreds of asylum seekers. In the first case, a judge ruled that Mr Howard had applied the wrong legal test in refusing to consider renewed applications made by two Sri Lankan Tamils, who fled to the UK in 1983 after repeated torture in their homeland. Mr Justice Dyson described

how Jayathurai Sandralingam and Senathirajah Ravichandran, both aged 26, had been arrested and tortured several times by Sri Lankan security forces fighting Tamil Tiger separatists. Their applications for asylum, on the basis that they had well-founded fears of persecution in their homeland, were first refused in August 1988, and subsequent appeals were rejected on the grounds that those who supported the Tigers, a terrorist organisation, were not entitled to the protection of the UN Convention on Refugees. It was also argued that they could safely be returned to Colombo. Both men lost further appeals to the House of Lords. But in February this year, as they faced deportation, they made fresh applications for leave to enter the UK in the light of recent evidence that

Tamil youths were being persecuted in Colombo. The judge said the Home Secretary had wrongly rejected those applications on the grounds that the source of the alleged persecution had not altered, but intensified — and that was not sufficient to constitute a new asylum claim. Ordering him to reconsider both cases, the judge said he had applied the wrong test. The men's solicitor, Kanapathipillai Sriharan, said: "There are many, many similar cases involving Sri Lankans who have fled their homes. If the Home Secretary rules that they do not qualify for asylum, they will have a right of appeal to an adjudicator. This is going to clog up the whole appeals system." Hours later, another judge cast doubt on Belgium's status as a safe third country, and granted orders to five applicants quashing decisions by immigration appeal adjudicators. It had been government policy that any asylum claimant who had been in Belgium before the UK should be returned there on the basis that it would be safe and reasonable to claim asylum. But Mr Justice Hilden, considering the case of three Turkish Kurds, a refugee from Togo and an Iraqi, said he was unable to agree with Mr Howard that Belgium was safe. There were "unresolved, conflicting opinions" over whether Belgium's eight-day time limit for asylum claims could lead to refugees sent back from the UK being deported subsequently. The Home Office has indicated that there will be no appeal against the ruling in the Tamils case.



The Grade II listed Victoria Hall, which includes the original organ, is at the centre of the scheme PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHER

## Teachers sacked for 'plot' win £24,000 from private school

**T**WO teachers yesterday won a total of £24,000 from a private school after they were sacked for allegedly plotting against the head teacher. Wendy Essen, aged 50, and Joy Kirby, 46, lost their jobs 15 months ago at Musgrave

primary school in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, for alleged gross misconduct. The owner, Jeff Redmayne, claimed that they wanted to discredit the head, Pamela Wood, by organising a netball club behind her back, then

blaming her for not providing first aid cover. But an industrial tribunal at Newcastle ruled that they were unfairly dismissed and that "no reasonable employer" would have come to the decision that led to the sackings.

Mrs Essen last night said she received a lot of support from parents "but I was unable to say anything. I now want to thank them." Two teachers who resigned after the sackings are claiming constructive dismissal.

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**Flymo**

## City to stoke cultural fires

David Ward

**S**TOKE-on-Trent is not known as an arts mecca, but the council aims to change that with a £21 million cultural quarter. A proposal for revamping the centre of Hanley in the city has won a £14.8 million grant, the third largest for an arts project outside London, from the Arts Council of England. "People here have been looking to Birmingham and Manchester for their entertainment," said Brian Smith, the city's opera-loving chief executive yesterday. "We want to keep them here and spending here." At the heart of the scheme are plans to improve facilities at the Grade II listed Victoria Hall and open up the long-closed Regent Theatre for the major touring productions which have, till now, bypassed Stoke. "We are trying to raise the profile of the city," said Mr Smith. "Without this

kind of cultural quarter, businesses would tend not to rate Stoke as highly as we might wish." The scheme will embrace the existing Theatre Royal, the city's brutalist library, the award-winning museum and art gallery and the Bethesda Chapel, a grand Methodist cathedral, still in desperate need of restoration. There are also plans to brighten up facades, tidy up and pedestrianise streets and install sculpture on prominent sites. The council believes that once the Regent reopens in 1998, tourists will flock to see its Grade II art deco interior, now painted a faded mustard yellow. It opened in 1929 as a cinema and theatre, rocked to the centre of Hanley during the 1960s and closed six years ago when Rank, which had converted it into a three-screen complex, put it on the market. The foyer is now approached through grim corrugated iron gates covered in fly posters and the interior smells of damp and neglect. The 1,600 seat Victoria Hall, regularly visited by the Halle and BBC Philharmonic orchestras, will be given new technical equipment and backstage facilities. A new glass foyer will provide comforts, including a bar, for patrons. Mr Smith said: "Hanley is not particularly welcoming to the large numbers of tourists who come here but do not stay as long as we might hope."

**Selling Hitler**

Gitta Sereny on the Holocaust industry

tomorrow in the Observer

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A woman comforts her son, aged four, in a Tyre hospital after he was wounded at Qana. PHOTOGRAPH: AHMED AZAVON

'If the Hizbullah stopped attacking us, then these things would never happen'

'I am sickened and appalled by the deaths in the UN base. But then I was unhappy with the scale of retaliation in the first place'

'In the short term, this has done terrible damage. In the long term, we might get a diplomatic solution out of it'



A leftwing Israeli shows her anger at the deaths in south Lebanon during a vigil near Shimon Peres's house in Jerusalem yesterday. She is holding a sign calling for an end to the killing of children in Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath against Hizbullah guerrillas. PHOTOGRAPH: NATHAN SHOHAT

How have Jews reacted to the Qana tragedy? JOHN EZARD in London and DEREK BROWN in Jerusalem report

British Jews back Peres

LEADING British Jews were appalled yesterday by the scale of the slaughter at Qana, but did not waver in their support for Israel's policy of retaliation, or their faith in Shimon Peres, the prime minister. They saw the shelling in a perspective of nearly 30 years of Israeli civilian deaths and injuries in northern Israel from guerrilla attacks across the border with Lebanon. "This incident is horrendous but it would be premature to say that it will prove to be a defining moment," said Tony Lehrman, director of the Institute of Jewish Policy Research in London. "In this dark moment, it may look as if peace is horribly threatened. But I have the feeling that it will perhaps get us back to the peace process."

The Jewish Chronicle went to press before the Qana attack with an editorial warning that Israeli policy could reach a dangerous morass. It forecast more civilian deaths as inevitable. The newspaper's editorial says today: "There can be no doubt that the election did play an indirect part in Mr Peres' calculations. He recognised that no leader of a democratically elected government could maintain credibility as a peacemaker while rockets trapped thousands of civilians in the north of the country in basement shelters. The priority now must be to couple the military campaign with a renewed diplomatic one. Other governments and media commentators are wrong, above all to ignore the fact that Israeli bombing could very likely be ended by a single order from [President] Assad in Damascus." The Chronicle's editor, Ned Twinko, who came under Israeli bombardment as a journalist in Lebanon 16 years ago, said yesterday that little had been changed by "the terrible tragedy" of Qana. "It is an inherent danger of

bombardments. Precautions can't make that danger go away, I don't think it has dented peace prospects. My hunch and hope is that it has certainly increased the desire of Israelis, Lebanese and Americans to find a negotiated solution. The real question is over Syria." The eminent London-based Jewish author Chaim Bermant said: "I am sickened and appalled by the deaths in the UN base. But then I was unhappy with the scale of retaliation in the first place. I anticipated a tragedy on this scale." "But what can you do with an enemy that shelters behind civilians? I only hope this slaughter will induce both Israel and Hizbullah to withdraw from southern Lebanon." Matthew Kalman, editor of the young Jewish magazine New Moon, said it was hard for outsiders to grasp the terror of childhoods spent in air raid shelters because of Hizbullah rockets. "The photographs from Lebanon look the same as photographs from the bombs in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. For the bereaved and injured the pain is the same. But the

causes are very different. "It wasn't a deliberate massacre like Sabra and Shatila; it was the considered military policy of an Israeli prime minister passionately committed to peace. I trust him not to make the same terrible mistake again." Officials at the Israeli embassy in London said that at least 83 civilians had been killed and 336 injured in attacks across the Lebanon border on northern Israeli towns, including Kiryat Shmona, since 1992. These included the slaughter of 20 child hostages at a school in Mas'ot. In the last six weeks, five civilians had been killed and 57 injured. The publisher Martine Halban, who is a volunteer worker for the New Israel Fund, said: "Peres is very keen to make up for the loss of Rabin," he said. "He wants peace more than anybody else in the world." "But to get it he finds himself having to use the strong methods Rabin would have used. In the short-term, this shelling has done terrible damage. In the long-term, I think we might get a diplomatic solution out of it."

Army's street cred grows

ISRAELI reaction to Thursday's massacre in south Lebanon has been muted, with mingled traces of embarrassment, frustration and defiance. Attempts by the government and army to shrug off the calamity as an "accident", were echoed in random soundings of Jerusalem residents yesterday. "I think we should finish it now," said a young woman who had been gazing intently into a shoe-shop window in one of the city's busiest streets. Did she mean stop the military onslaught on Lebanon? "No, no, no," she said impatiently. "Finish it. Do it properly. Deal with these people once and for all."

"I agree with her," chimed an older woman. "We can't stop it now. The Katyushas are still coming into Galilee; the people there are still in the shelters. Why should we stop? We're sorry for what happened. Of course we are sorry, we're human beings. But if they [Hizbullah] stopped attacking us, then these things would never happen again." Friday mornings are Jerusalem's busiest, a frantic round of pre-sabbath shopping and socialising. This sabbath, perhaps, should have been more sober than usual, but it was not. "I've no time, no time," an elderly man wearing his skullcap said. "I like what our army is doing, that's all I can tell you."

A woman selling Indian-made cheap jewellery in a public square in the tourist quarter was more forthcoming, but less logical. "What is happening in Lebanon may not be nice, but it's the only way we have of protecting our soldiers. They've been getting killed all the time, and we have to hit back," she said. Israel has occupied southern Lebanon as a buffer zone for 11 years. The occupation principle, however, remains popular, and is rarely questioned. In yesterday's Israeli papers there was little hint that the latest calamity might merit some radical rethink. Commentators instead lamented that the "incident, the tragedy" could under-

mine Israel's demand that Hizbullah stop firing rockets across the border. Many pundits neatly turned the finger of blame on the Syrian president, Hafez al-Assad, pointing out that only he could bring Hizbullah to heel. On Thursday night, there was a public protest in Jerusalem against the Lebanon massacre. Peace activists, many of them from Israel's 1 million-strong Arab population, gathered in a square near the official residence of the prime minister, Shimon Peres. "Peres, how many children did you kill today?" they chanted. But the words of the 100 protesters were drowned by passing traffic.

US pushes for Kurdish peace

Chris Nuttall in Ankara THE Clinton administration has launched a new round of talks aimed at negotiating a peace settlement between rival Kurdish groups controlling northern Iraq. The United States initiative has received an unusually optimistic reception from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), who both appear to believe that a final agreement can now be reached. Three previous peace attempts have failed, but the rival factions know that a united opposition to President Saddam Hussein in the north of the country would serve both their interests and those of the US. A peace settlement appears particularly attractive now that the Iraqi first and fifth armies wait threateningly above and just below the 36th parallel, which marks the no-fly zone set up five years ago by the US, Britain, France and Turkey. It would also help the PUK and KDP to siphon off their share of the benefits of any deal between the United Nations and Iraq to resume oil sales. The Kurds would be entitled to 15 per cent of the

proceeds of oil piped through northern Iraq, to be spent on humanitarian goods. The US state department's director of northern Gulf affairs, Robert Deutsch, and Stephen Grummon of the National Security Council are flying to northern Iraq today following talks at the Turkish foreign ministry in Ankara. American officials say they are hopeful of resolving some disagreements over the text of a draft agreement. The KDP and PUK agreed on a ceasefire last August, after a year of fighting. Their feuding has cost about 3,000 lives and split the region into two zones. The disputes centres on PUK control of the main city of Irbil and the sharing out of revenues from oil trade at the Turkish border. The KDP leader, Massoud Barzani, and his PUK counterpart, Jalal Talabani, have yet to negotiate face-to-face, but both have made conciliatory statements during the past month. A final agreement needs to be reached on the demilitarisation of Irbil, the reversion of the local parliament, the establishment of a neutral committee to handle revenues and the setting up of a broad-based interim government before elections are held.

News in brief

UN chief pulls out of Rwanda

AS THE commander and last member of United Nations forces in Rwanda pulled out yesterday, a UN envoy arrived to defuse rows with the government about a UN office and equipment left behind by the peacekeepers. Brigadier-General Siva Kumar, from India, and five bodyguards flew out on a transport plane to Ndorohi, the last Unamir (UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda) flight to Kenya. "We did a good job here under very difficult circumstances. I am proud of what the troops achieved," he said. Marrack Goulding, the UN envoy, arrived shortly after and said he was confident of persuading the Rwandan government to accept a small UN political office and end a row over equipment left behind by Unamir. His mission appeared tough, given the government's hostility towards the UN, which it blames for failing to stop the genocide of 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 1994. — Reuter.

'Robe of Christ' goes on display

PILGRIMS flocked to the cathedral in the west German city of Trier yesterday to see the robe believers say Christ wore on his way to the cross. It is only the third time this century that the cathedral has put its most revered relic on display. About 4,000 worshippers celebrated a special mass to open the four-week exhibition of the "Holy Coat of Trier", which is expected to attract up to 1 million pilgrims and tourists. Scholars have long disputed whether the garment could be the seamless robe worn by Christ. Textile historians say it is now impossible to verify if the garment is genuine. — Reuter.

Greek relatives collect dead

GRIEVING relatives gathered at the main morgue in Athens yesterday to collect the bodies of 18 Greek pilgrims killed in a terrorist attack outside a Cairo hotel. "She was working in Germany to make money so she could retire to Greece. She went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to pray for her fam-

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Handwritten Arabic text: "سكسكو جازيل"





It was a Soviet Eden for the power workers. Then their reactor exploded, and the USSR collapsed. James Meek discovers how Ukrainians are coping with the fallout and, below, the continuing risks of meeting their energy needs

# The fires, the ashes, the scars of Chernobyl

How beautiful it was after the reactor exploded. Littering in the warmth of a spring evening, the people of Pripjat gazed in fascination at the play of colours in the sky over Chernobyl. "I went back to work the next night... there were cylindrical pillars of light of a bright orange colour, like clouds, colliding and rising and falling as if in a paraffin lamp. There were colours such as I've never seen in nature," said Boris Rogozhkin, who was in charge of all four reactors on the night of the disaster.

Svetlana Sobol was 22 and worked in the station canteen. It had never occurred to her that nuclear plants might be dangerous for her or her three-year-old daughter, Tatyana. "There was such a beautiful red glow," she said. "Nobody knew there was any radiation, or that we should be taking some kind of special care. We lived in a district that was right next to the station. Out of curiosity people were climbing up onto their roofs to look and see what had happened, because there was an unusual, pretty glow."

Pripjat was not evacuated until the afternoon of April 27 1986, more than 36 hours after the accident. Tatyana is 13 now, a small girl with a face the colour of candle wax, sitting dried-eyed, tight-lipped, head bowed, between two crying women in a schoolroom in Kiev. Next door is an exhibition of children's pictures. The children have picked the brightest scarlet crayons in their boxes to draw extravagant, hook-shaped slashes across the throats of their human figures.

At her mother's request, Tatyana reluctantly rolls down the high neck of her jumper to show what it is they were drawing: a curving pink scar where her

thyroid gland has just been removed. The surgeons may have to operate again. There are fears that the cancer may have spread. "I was tired all the time before the operation," Tatyana said. "It's not much better now. My heart hurts." She stares into the table and lapses back into silence. More than 1,000 children under the age of 18 have been operated on for thyroid cancer in Belarus and Ukraine since the Chernobyl disaster, a twentyfold increase in the normal rate and the first internationally-accepted sign of long-term health damage caused by radiation from the exploded reactor.

"There will be more surgery," Mrs Sobol said. "The surgeon noticed a metastasis in the neck and around the ears. We hope for the best, of course, but it's hard to say now." Ten years on, survivors like the Sobols are struggling to cope not with the consequences of not one disaster but two. In their minds, in their lives, the consequences of the first — the world's worst civilian nuclear disaster — are impossible to separate from those of the second, the collapse of the Soviet Union.

If the first gave Tatyana thyroid cancer, the second created an independent Ukraine so poor it can pay her a disability allowance of only 2.5 million karbovatns a month — about £9 — and cannot guarantee a reliable supply of two vital substances — the hormones thyroxine, which she has to take every day, and radioactive iodine, necessary to detect remaining cancer cells. The survivors grieve now for their sudden loss of innocence, their realisation how full of lies the old system was, their exclusion from a snug,

secure Soviet lifestyle. Yet what they experienced in 1986 was an extreme version of what millions subsequently experienced as the USSR collapsed. Driving today through the overgrown streets of the Pripjat ghost town, with its stumpy grey apartment blocks and its numbered monotonous shops, it is hard for a foreigner to comprehend what a paradise it was to its Soviet inhabitants, many of whom had come to Ukraine from the bleak closed nuclear cities of Siberia. Glorious woods and waterlands, a flat



virtually guaranteed, and the shops stocked at supply level number 2 only one step below Moscow itself. "It was cozy, quiet and green," Mrs Sobol said. "They'd built it in an enchanting place... it was built for the benefit of the people who lived there. It was very good, we'd just got married, had a young child and they were already giving us a flat. If I'd been in Kiev I would have had to have waited much longer."

Fyotr Shavrel, one of three firemen brothers who fought to prevent the fire spreading to the other Chernobyl reactors and received near-fatal doses of radiation as a result, said: "Every year they tell me I must have been in shock. I must have been terrified. I must have nightmares about it to this day. No, I don't. I dream about the place I used to live, Pripjat, and the places I used to go hunting and fishing."

To its inhabitants Chernobyl was a Soviet Eden, but inside its guarded perimeter engineers were trying with a particularly dangerous branch of the tree of knowledge. Boris Rogozhkin, one of the three survivors of the six Chernobyl personnel jailed for causing the accident by ignoring safety rules, has spent the last 10 years studying what happened and trying to clear his name. He believes he has done so, and concludes that at least one of the 15 RBMK-type reactors built in the former Soviet Union was doomed by design to blow up.

All RBMK reactors, he says, suffer leaks of water and steam from badly designed joints in the complex circuitry which sends cool water into the hot reactor and takes steam out to drive the turbines. The leaks can be brought on by vibrations in the main circulation pump, which occur whenever the pump is switched on or off — just as a household tap with a worn flange will shudder.



The agony continues... Surgeons in Kiev remove cancerous growths from the neck of a boy of 14, his fifth operation since the initial removal of his thyroid. Left, a girl of 6 undergoes a scan to assess brain damage probably caused by radiation. It is becoming apparent that brain damage may be a serious problem

could be powered for a short time by a switched-off turbine as it freewheeled to a standstill. This unstable power source, Mr Rogozhkin says, radically increased the vibrations in the pump, causing multiple leaks into the reactor itself, a sudden increase in high-pressure steam in the confined space around the hot uranium fuel rods and, at 1.24am on April 26 1986, two powerful explosions. "There never should have been a point in the test programme which involved hitching the main pump to a freewheeling turbine. Even in normal conditions, when the pump was switched on or off it would vibrate so loudly that you'd want to get out of the way."

His arguments are convincing, he speaks without bitterness. Yet 10 years on he cannot get what he feels he deserves — rehabilitation. "We were condemned by the supreme court of the USSR. And now the USSR no longer exists. Ukraine didn't judge us, Russia didn't judge us. We're left hanging." The second blast blew open the roof and flipped the enormous reactor lid open, where it still lies today under the sarcophagus, balanced precariously on its rim like a penny in the mouth of a chimble. A column of radioactive dust and gas poured 3,000ft

into the air, spreading contamination equal to 500 Hiroshima bombs over thousands of square miles of inhabited land in Belarus and Ukraine. The coming days were a time of ignorance for many survivors, before they came to terms with the huge radiation doses they had received. Their survival would seem extraordinarily hopeful were it not for the fear that the thyroid cancer tragedy will be followed by other delayed-action cancer increases. Vladimir Zabolodnich has been told he is dead, but he is back at Chernobyl, doing the job he was doing on the night of the disaster: monitoring the station's water supply.

"When they took my film badge and examined it in Moscow they said I couldn't be alive. I still don't know what the dose was: it was classified. But two months after the accident the radioactivity of my lungs was the same as reactor water. Mr Zabolodnich called his family at home in Pripjat and told them to close their windows, but most people did not even know they should take this elementary precaution. When he went off shift late

that morning he saw children running around in their shorts, women out shopping, windows wide open in the warm air — and went off to share a bottle of vodka with a friend before going to bed. "Where could we have sent them?" How could you send your children away, not knowing whether they might end up somewhere more contaminated? Far from everyone had a car. Besides, who would have been in charge of the station if the specialists had run away? In the big picture, the shift working that night and the next saved not just Pripjat but probably half of Europe.

Older Ukrainians are used to terrible events. At 71, Mikhailo Radkevich can remember the collectivisation and famine of the 1930s and the Nazi invasion of 1941. Evacuated from his village, Dilintsi, 11 miles from the station, it seemed natural for him to return, as he had returned from forced labour in Germany after the war. But nobody tried to tell them after the famine or the war that the very soil itself was poison. "We tried to get back any way we could," said Mr Radkevich, one of about 100 elderly people who now live in Dilintsi. His children and grandchildren visit, but do not stay more than a day or two. "Maybe the younger generation will get used to radiation," he said hopefully. "They told us we couldn't live here, that there was radiation and everything. They came and told us to leave and I said: 'Dig up a grave and bury us here.'"

He and his wife live much as other Ukrainian peasant pensioners eked out a living on the ruins of a collective farm: their collective simply collapsed sooner. A lorry delivers bread, they hope their pension will be paid on time, the only thing they buy is sugar. They watch television, grow their own vegetables, keep a cow, a pig and chickens. The authorities gave them a piece of paper saying they could drink their milk. "It's all propaganda that animals are born without legs or heads," he said. "I've had five calves born here and they've all been normal."

The real damage was worse, Mr Radkevich's sons both worked at the station. "I know what grief is. My youngest son, he lost his thyroid. I understand the grief but there's nothing to be done."


## The shift working that night and the next probably saved half of Europe

Everywhere you go in Ukraine there are reminders that energy is a life or death business. During an interview about Chernobyl in the fire brigade HQ in Kiev a young fireman joined us, fresh from a callout to the nearby town of Belsya Tserkov. A family of five — parents and three children — had burned to death in a fire started by a faulty cable connected to a heating element of the cooker they had been using to warm themselves all winter. In the first two months of this year, almost 750 Ukrainians died in fires, many linked to pathetic attempts to keep warm as district heating systems failed them.

## Paying the price of home heating

Each year about 300 underground workers are killed in accidents in Ukraine's hideously unsafe pits, 10 times as many as died in the immediate aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster. In the euphoric pro-independence mood of the late 1980s, Ukrainians felt they could do without the Chernobyl nuclear power plant to keep the country warm and lit. They forgot their reliance on virtually free Russian and Central Asian oil and gas and they forgot how run-down and deadly their Donbass mines were. By the time Mr Anukhin's team reached their colleagues, 11 were dead, two injured. They moved the wounded to safety, 300 yards back along the tunnel, and were returning for the bodies when the second blast happened. "In an instant you're hurled off your feet. You open your eyes and it's dark all around. The lights are all broken and there's thick dust everywhere, you can't see anything. You stick your mouthpiece between your teeth and switch on the oxygen because you can't breathe any more. Then you start to get yourself together, switch on your lamp and get on with the rescue work."

Explosions boomed through the mine all day and fires were started. The final death toll of the August 1982 incident was 17: two miners and 15 rescuers. A few foreign newspapers gave the incident a cursory mention; most Ukrainian mine accidents go unremarked. Of Ukraine's five nuclear power stations, only one is of the unsafe Chernobyl type: the rest are conventional pressurised water reactors of the Soviet VVER design. One new VVER reactor was switched on last year and more will soon be ready. Ten years after the Chernobyl disaster, atomic power provides more than half the country's electricity. Nuclear workers have become a new elite far and away the best paid state employees. What then of the future of Chernobyl itself, where two



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Racing

General Wolfe to scale the heights

Improving young chaser tailor-made for Scottish Grand National, says Ron Cox

A WEEK of intense Flat racing continues with another 2,000 Guineas trial at Newbury today. But for sheer entertainment value...

gent Dunwoody ride. However, with Pridwell - 9lb better off with Alderbrook here...



Sham for sure... Bosra Sham, ridden by Pat Eddery, gallops away with the Fred Darling Stakes at Newbury yesterday to underline her 1,000 Guineas prospects. PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL COLE

Bosra Sham odds-on for 1,000 Guineas

PAT EDDERY, who has landed all the British classics except the 1,000 Guineas, is convinced Bosra Sham will correct that omission at Newmarket in two weeks' time...

Newbury with form for the televised events

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 2.00 Brighton Water, 2.10 Maresham, 2.20 Royal Ascot, 2.30 Royal Ascot.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 2.00 ALBION INTERNATIONAL, 2.10 ALBION INTERNATIONAL, 2.20 ALBION INTERNATIONAL.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 2.30 LAMBS AND JOHN PORTER STAKES, 2.40 LAMBS AND JOHN PORTER STAKES.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 3.00 TRIPLETON GREENHORN STAKES, 3.10 TRIPLETON GREENHORN STAKES.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 3.30 LADDERBURY SPURS CUP HANDICAP, 3.40 LADDERBURY SPURS CUP HANDICAP.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 4.00 BETHVENYON AUCTION, 4.10 BETHVENYON AUCTION.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 4.30 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES, 4.40 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 5.00 LEVY STAKE, 5.10 LEVY STAKE.

Ayr (N.H.) with TV form

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 4.50 Maresham, 4.55 Maresham.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 1.55 ALBERT BATTLEFIELD, 1.55 ALBERT BATTLEFIELD.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 2.25 BAYVIEW PROGRESS, 2.25 BAYVIEW PROGRESS.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 3.50 Maresham, 3.55 Maresham.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 5.15 ALBERT BATTLEFIELD, 5.15 ALBERT BATTLEFIELD.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 5.45 STONTS TAIL, 5.45 STONTS TAIL.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 6.15 TRICOLOR HANDICAP, 6.15 TRICOLOR HANDICAP.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 6.45 GREEN HIGHLANDER, 6.45 GREEN HIGHLANDER.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 7.15 BLACK HOUND, 7.15 BLACK HOUND.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 7.50 WILHELM GISE, 7.50 WILHELM GISE.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 8.00 RICHMOND DEVELOPMENTS, 8.00 RICHMOND DEVELOPMENTS.

Ascot (N.H.) tonight

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 5.15 Ascot, 5.15 Ascot.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 5.15 ALBERT BATTLEFIELD, 5.15 ALBERT BATTLEFIELD.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 5.45 STONTS TAIL, 5.45 STONTS TAIL.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 6.15 TRICOLOR HANDICAP, 6.15 TRICOLOR HANDICAP.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 6.45 GREEN HIGHLANDER, 6.45 GREEN HIGHLANDER.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 7.15 BLACK HOUND, 7.15 BLACK HOUND.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 7.50 WILHELM GISE, 7.50 WILHELM GISE.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 8.00 RICHMOND DEVELOPMENTS, 8.00 RICHMOND DEVELOPMENTS.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 8.30 RICHMOND DEVELOPMENTS, 8.30 RICHMOND DEVELOPMENTS.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 8.55 RICHMOND DEVELOPMENTS, 8.55 RICHMOND DEVELOPMENTS.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 9.20 RICHMOND DEVELOPMENTS, 9.20 RICHMOND DEVELOPMENTS.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 2.55 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES, 2.55 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 3.25 DAILY STAR OF SCOTLAND, 3.25 DAILY STAR OF SCOTLAND.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 4.05 STARS CARRON SCOTTER, 4.05 STARS CARRON SCOTTER.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 4.40 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES, 4.40 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 5.10 STARS CARRON SCOTTER, 5.10 STARS CARRON SCOTTER.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 5.40 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES, 5.40 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 6.10 STARS CARRON SCOTTER, 6.10 STARS CARRON SCOTTER.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 6.40 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES, 6.40 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 7.10 STARS CARRON SCOTTER, 7.10 STARS CARRON SCOTTER.

Channel 4

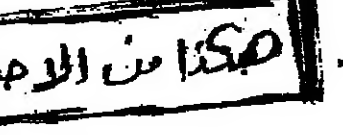
Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 7.40 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES, 7.40 BURGONLEIGH HURDLE STAKES.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race number and race name. Includes 8.10 STARS CARRON SCOTTER, 8.10 STARS CARRON SCOTTER.

John Dunlop's Masaka Stakes second Parrot Jungle (Pat Eddery) and Peter Chapple-Hyam's Inner Circle (John Reid) meet in tomorrow's Group Two Premio Regina Elena...

Emma O'Gorman, injured in an horrific looking fall at Newmarket on Wednesday, was released from hospital yesterday and hopes to be back riding in time to partner Music Gold at Bath at the end of the month.





Sham on for Guinness

Rugby League

Super League: Wigan 22, Bradford 6

Tuigamala tames Bulls

Paul Fitzpatrick

THE Bath rugby union players, who play Orrell at Central Park today, were introduced to the crowd at half-time last night...

after a typically impudent and alert piece of finishing... with two big men, Matt Allard and George Bradley...

Sport and the Law

The landmark Ben Smoldon judgment could turn the sports ground into a legal minefield with dire implications for those involved

A game referees can only lose



Hard lesson... teaching rugby union is fraught with difficulties at the best of times

PHOTOGRAPH: JEFFREY WILKINSON

Roger Uttley on the likely impact on volunteer officials

YOU must forgive your son's rugby coach if he looks worried this morning, because he has every right to be...

charge are lined up about the latest developments in both the laws of the game and coaching techniques...

Currie drops more slacking Broncos

FOR the second week in succession Tony Currie, the London Broncos' coach, has dropped players for disciplinary reasons...

the Broncos' football manager. "We ask for 100 per cent commitment, and that is what we expect from all our players..."

Awareness and application of rules is paramount

Tom Usher considers the implications of yesterday's verdict for sport in the future

ONE of the statements made by Mr Justice Currie yesterday was: "No responsible referee has anything to fear..."

level for which the rules of rugby had been specifically modified. However this is the first case where the liability of the referee has been the subject of a successful personal-injury action in the UK courts...

degree of care for the safety of players which is appropriate in the circumstances. The duty of care will be higher when players are young and amateur...

Could the referee be held responsible? The answer is most probably no, since the circumstances of a professional football match are different and a responsible referee could have done no more to prevent that injury...

of the batsman. An umpire owes a duty of care to the batsman to ensure that he is not exposed to unnecessary risk of injury...

many times has the referee been criticised? If the test formulated in the Smoldon case is applied, it will only be in circumstances where the referee has failed properly to apply the laws of the game...

Thirk runners and riders

Table with columns for race number, name, and details. Includes sections for 2.15, 2.20, 2.25, 2.30, 2.35, 2.40, 2.45, 2.50, 2.55, 3.00, 3.05, 3.10, 3.15, 3.20, 3.25, 3.30, 3.35, 3.40, 3.45, 3.50, 3.55, 4.00, 4.05, 4.10, 4.15, 4.20, 4.25, 4.30, 4.35, 4.40, 4.45, 4.50, 4.55, 5.00, 5.05, 5.10, 5.15, 5.20, 5.25, 5.30, 5.35, 5.40, 5.45, 5.50, 5.55, 6.00, 6.05, 6.10, 6.15, 6.20, 6.25, 6.30, 6.35, 6.40, 6.45, 6.50, 6.55, 7.00, 7.05, 7.10, 7.15, 7.20, 7.25, 7.30, 7.35, 7.40, 7.45, 7.50, 7.55, 8.00, 8.05, 8.10, 8.15, 8.20, 8.25, 8.30, 8.35, 8.40, 8.45, 8.50, 8.55, 9.00, 9.05, 9.10, 9.15, 9.20, 9.25, 9.30, 9.35, 9.40, 9.45, 9.50, 9.55, 10.00, 10.05, 10.10, 10.15, 10.20, 10.25, 10.30, 10.35, 10.40, 10.45, 10.50, 10.55, 11.00, 11.05, 11.10, 11.15, 11.20, 11.25, 11.30, 11.35, 11.40, 11.45, 11.50, 11.55, 12.00, 12.05, 12.10, 12.15, 12.20, 12.25, 12.30, 12.35, 12.40, 12.45, 12.50, 12.55, 13.00, 13.05, 13.10, 13.15, 13.20, 13.25, 13.30, 13.35, 13.40, 13.45, 13.50, 13.55, 14.00, 14.05, 14.10, 14.15, 14.20, 14.25, 14.30, 14.35, 14.40, 14.45, 14.50, 14.55, 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Soccer

Collymore will have to wait

David Lacey

ALAN SHEARER's groin operation and Les Ferdinand's broken toe will deny Terry Venables the use of his two main strikers when England play Croatia at Wembley on Wednesday. Shearer, in fact, will be lucky to make the tour of China and Hong Kong shortly before the European Championship.

Fowler and Collymore. For one thing this would mean leaving out Teddy Sheringham, and Venables would not want to do that. The England coach's guarded reaction to suggestions that the Liverpool pair might line up against Croatia said it all. "It's a combination you feel would do well," he said, "but I've got to work out what is best for the team. "Picking people in pairs is all very well, but what happens if one of them gets injured? Provided you've got players of quality they'll always come in and complement one another.

match for England but if Collymore does join him it will probably be as a substitute. Collymore's case has been strengthened by the more diverse role he has established for himself at Arsenal. "I feel I'm playing as well as ever but in a different way," he said. "I'm not so much of an out-and-out striker as I was. I'm going a little bit deeper, getting out wider and getting more crosses in. Now I see more of the ball and there's more space." The England coach agreed: "He comes a lot deeper and uses the wide areas well."

Success-starved Roker set to put the flags out

Ian Ross on the league's ups and downs that may be decided over the weekend

THE pampered feet of the Premiership's rich and famous are idle this weekend but for the honest journeymen of English soccer the moment of destiny may well have arrived.

promotion to the Premiership but, typically, Reid refuses to celebrate until after Stoke City's visit. If Derby County can keep their nerve they too will be promoted without recourse to the play-offs.

If the meeting of Luton Town and Watford at Kenilworth Road yields a decisive result, Swindon Town will return to the First Division only 12 months after falling out of it if they can collect something from their day trip to Blackpool, the club who have kept them company at the top of the Second Division all season.

Ferdinand targets Leeds

LES FERDINAND, the Newcastle United striker withdrawn from the England squad after Wednesday's 1-0 defeat of Southampton, has said he hopes to be fit for Monday week's crucial game with Leeds.

that I will have to have another injection before the game and go through agonies in the last 15 minutes again." Ferdinand broke the toe at Queens Park Rangers a fortnight ago. "I followed through and caught the bottom of Alan McDonald's studs," he said. "I actually felt it break and it was really sore and painful."

club the chance to return to European competition next season. Dynamo were banned by European soccer's governing body last September over an alleged attempt to bribe the referee at a Champions' League match against Panathinaikos. Kjevi won the game 0-0 but Uefa awarded the result and replaced them with the Danes Aalborg. Two Dynamo officials were barred from Uefa-related activities for life.



Performance of the week: David Batty (Newcastle United), who was outstanding both in Sunday's win against Aston Villa and Wednesday's victory over Southampton.

Cruyff junior goes Dutch

JORDI CRUYFF, the Barcelona striker, is following his father Johan into the Holland squad. The 22-year-old was yesterday named in the squad for next Wednesday's friendly against Germany in Rotterdam.

Kevin Cullis, who lasted only seven days as manager of Swindon, is to sue the Second Division club for breach of contract. Cullis, whose only previous managerial experience was with a boys' team, is claiming damages for the termination of his 2½-year contract.

TEAM SHEET

Derby County v Birmingham Derby's Paul Trollope is set for a rare outing because of injuries and suspensions, and Birmingham's Paul Peschiera left as Jonathan Hunt set to return.

Reading v Charlton Reading's joint player-manager Mick Gooding is set to return after suspension but is set to be back after his Charlton teammates and Richard Pugh back after suspension.

Wolves v Crystal Palace The midfielder Mark Adams is set to return for Wolves, who are likely to be without Simon Osborn (injured) and have James Smith and Darren Ferguson banned. Darren Fletcher returns for Palace but Ray Houston is nursing



Self-starter... Slaven Bilic gets in some marking practice in case Robbie Fowler plays at Wembley

West Ham gypsy Bilic gets ready to balk England

Martin Thorpe on the east-end defender carrying Croatian hopes this Wednesday

SLAVEN BILIC has a revolutionary solution should England's first top-class strikers all find themselves fit for Euro '96. "Maybe if I was coach I'd play with three of them," he says. "Ferdinand and Shearer together with Fowler just behind. The idea might be risky, but as a defender it would cause problems for the opposition."

earing in his left lobe. And instead of a house in Chigwell, one in London's Chelsea Harbour — "to be near the people I like and my wife and kids." Bilic and his wife Andrijana "visit museums, walk by the river, go to concerts — my favourite is Bruce Springsteen — and eat in nice restaurants."

stop the ball, to look a little bit like a player. "But you don't have to be embarrassed here, because the technique is high quality." Even so he thinks Croatia can beat England on Wednesday, though winning the European Championship is another matter. The blandishments of others appear to have gone to the head of the coach Miroslav Blazevic — "Attila" behind his back — who has been telling everyone that not only can Croatia win this summer's tournament, they are going to.

the left, and Asanovic's pace will raid the right. The quick and strong Suker of Seville plays up front, with Boksic probably starting alongside him. The Lazio player is badly out of form at the moment and his place is under pressure from the emerging Goran Vlasovic of Padova. Here is a player relishing a new lease of life — literally. Not long ago he was diagnosed as having a brain tumour and was told he would never play again. But the tumour was benign and after an operation to remove it he was back playing again within four months.

His idea of a good time is a heated political discussion

the best in the world." Ever since he watched Liverpool and Nottingham Forest dominate the European Cup on his grandmother's flickering black-and-white television he has also had a sneaking admiration for English football and is happy to play here. "In my opinion Europe has four top-quality leagues: Germany, Italy, England and Spain, with France getting near to it now. I think the quality of the football is similar, but what makes England different is the atmosphere in the grounds. It's something cultural, really something special."

qualifying, all were against low-to-medium-grade opposition. So Bilic offers caution. "In reality the only top-class team we have played in the past two years has been Italy. The real test is at Wembley, the home of football. If we do well against England we can say we have a team and a chance in Euro '96."

Wedge's game — the one in September was cancelled because of an escalation in the war — will also offer the coach a rare chance to field all the players who on paper make Croatia's potential so impressive. Because of injury and club calls, this fledgling state's best side have never played together in a competitive match. But the lure of playing at Wembley has brought out all the stars. So Croatia's captain Boban of Milan will be busy in mind and body in midfield; the mercurial Prosenicki of Barcelona will whip up his creations from

Then there are the wing-backs, Jurcovic and Jan, a Double-winner with Juventus last season. It is at full-back where one of Croatia's main problems is most apparent. Quality cover for the top players is thin on the ground, which means that a bad run of injuries or yellow cards in Euro '96 could weaken the team irreparably. Against that, they have been drawn in arguably the easiest of the summer groups, alongside Turkey, Portugal and Denmark. "But," says Bilic, "we're not afraid of anyone."

Rangers try to wrap up eighth title in a row

Patrick Glenn THOSE Celtic fans hoping for a stroll to victory against the Premier Division's bottom club, Falkirk, should remember that this could be the day on which Rangers secure their eighth successive championship. If Celtic lose and Rangers win, the side in blue will take the title.

wins and a draw — with no goals conceded — in eight games. And they drew 0-0 with Rangers at Fir Park and considered themselves unlucky to lose 3-2 at Ibrox. Still, Celtic's problems in handling the lower orders have been almost as notable as their achievement in losing only once in 33 league outings. Three draws and one win over Kilmarnock testify to the difficulties Tommy Burns's team have contrived for themselves. And their endeavours against today's visitors have also been unimpressive, with a scoreless draw at Brockville sandwiched between two 1-0 wins. Celtic have not been fluent

in their last three matches — defeat by Rangers in the semi-final of the Scottish Cup, a 1-1 draw with Kilmarnock and a sweaty 2-1 victory over Hibernian — and this is no time to be losing their conviction. Rangers' match at Motherwell — who have a problem with the fitness of their main striker Tommy Coyne — probably represents Celtic's best hope of their rivals' sustaining serious damage before the line is reached. The champions face Aberdeen at home and Kilmarnock away in their last two. Celtic follow today's meeting with Falkirk with a visit to Partick Thistle and a home game with Raith Rovers.

WHITE Hart Lane-based London Monarchs are looking for a more reliable kicker to launch the ball over the bar. Surely they should sign Ronnie Rosenthal. STRANGER than fiction. Remember the old Ipswich player Eric Gates? Last weekend a chap came up to him and said, "I've got something of yours." Says Gates: "He told me it was the signed ball I had been given for my hat-trick against Man City in 1979. I said it couldn't be as it was stolen from my brother's car seven years ago. He said, 'Yes, I know, I stole it.' He said he'd drop it off later in the week." It still has not appeared.

Shirt sharp shock tactics

Soccer Diary

Martin Thorpe

GIVE Manchester United half a chance and they will take the shirt from your back. Actually, last weekend's rumpus over the grey area of colours might do some good. Surely it is about time shirts were designed with players in mind rather than jeans. But United can have no defence against accusations of commercial exploitation, even though they knocked £10 off the price of the new white strip. The simple fact is that United do not need a third strip. There is not one Premiership side whose colours clash with both United's red strip and their blue-and-white stripes.

nothing is new. Tom Hinchelwood of Wishaw in Scotland remembers a story line in the Rover comic of the late 1940s concerning Nick Smith, who became player-manager of Tadcaster Rovers, languishing in the Third Division North. It took only a few games for Nick to realise why the team were so bad: it was the colour of the kit. The kit was changed to red, and guess what? Tadcaster went on to become league champions and win the FA Cup. Actually, up until last weekend the team with the most away wins in the four English divisions was Shrewsbury, and their away kit? All grey (from Kevin Moore in Shrewsbury).

TANNOY announcement of the week (at Highbury): "Your partner has just given birth, and here you are at Arsenal v Spurs. Just to make it worse, she's called it Chelsea."

IT WAS meant to be a charity golf day with Midlands soccer journalists and local Football League clubs playing for the National Antislavery Society. But relationships between two of the participating teams, Leicester and Wolves, have been so bad ever since Mark McGhee quit Leicester for Wolves, leaving the City chairman Martin George fuming. And it was not helped by Thursday's event. Leicester's golf team included George and his new manager Martin O'Neill and Wolves' included the chairman Jonathan Hayward and McGhee who, while walking towards his ball on the 14th, was surprised to see O'Neill looking for his stray ball from the 14th. According to Wolves, O'Neill then played McGhee's ball.

At the end of the tournament Wolves lodged a complaint and O'Neill, having already departed, the organisers accepted Wolves' version of events and doctored O'Neill two points. Unfortunately it took him from first place in the tournament to fourth.

On discovering that his victory had been taken away, O'Neill went ballistic, strenuously denying he had cheated. It all sounds like a misunderstanding in which case perhaps Wolves could show a bit more charity.



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# SportsGuardian

On the eve of the House of Mot...

Some things stay there some things go out of the other end and some don't go at all

What have we done wrong? We thought that we had brought them up so well

If the people voted against the monarchy I would go quietly

## England turn to beaten Botham

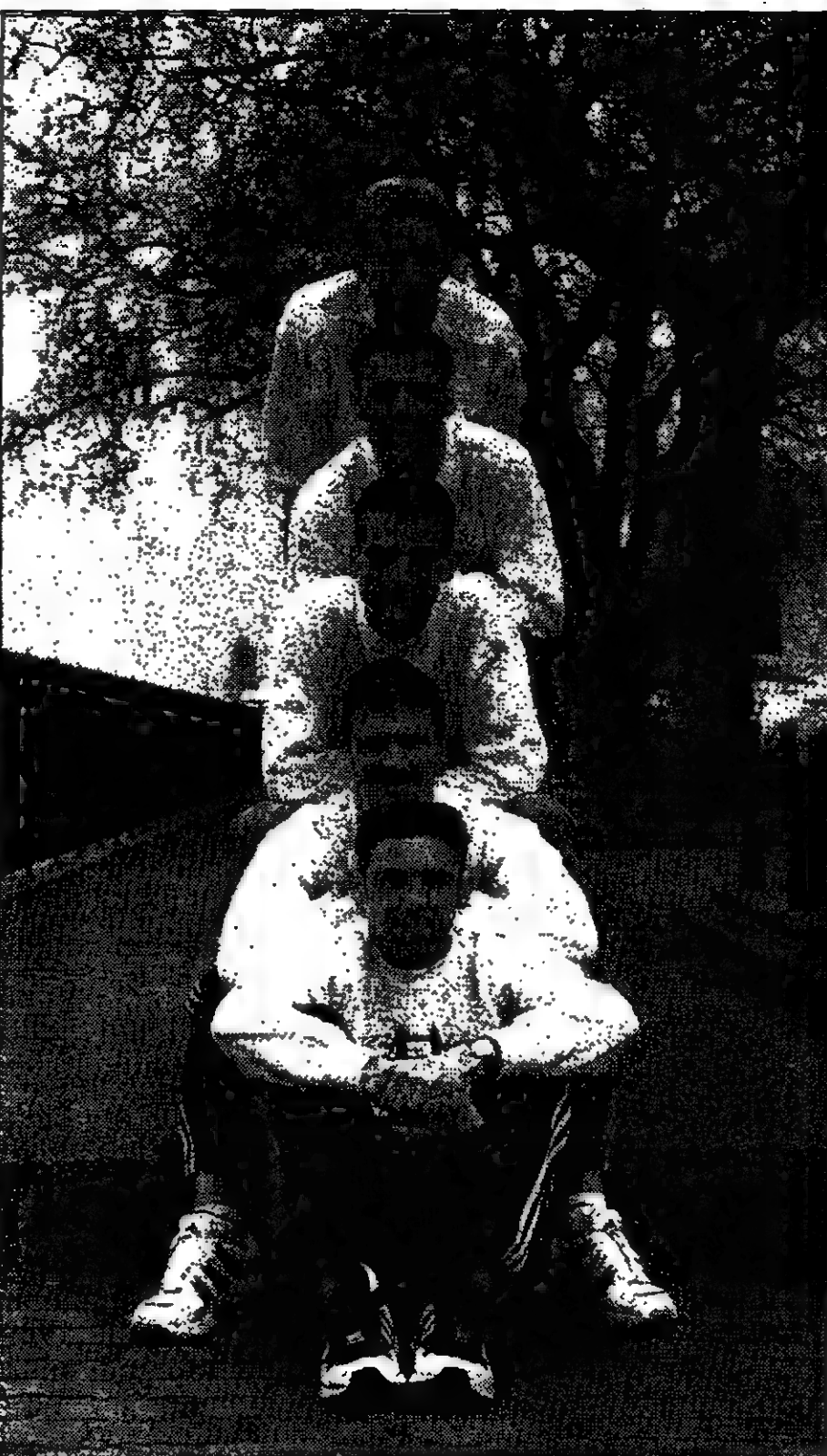
Mike Selvey reports on moves to recruit the talents of the inspirational all-rounder

ENGLAND'S cricket hierarchy will shortly extend an olive branch to Ian Botham by asking him to become part of David Lloyd's coaching team. Botham, who says he is desperate to help pull the game from the mire, suffered a rebuff on Thursday when the county chairman ignored his nomination to become a selector and instead opted for David Graveney and Graham Gooch.

But when the new selection panel meet in Chelmsford over the next few days, Botham's name will be high on the agenda and his enthusiasm is likely to be incorporated into a progressive new structure. Yesterday, in his tabloid newspaper column, Botham accused the Test and County Cricket Board of using a "dirty tricks department", claiming they "did their best to derail my attempts to help revive English Test cricket".

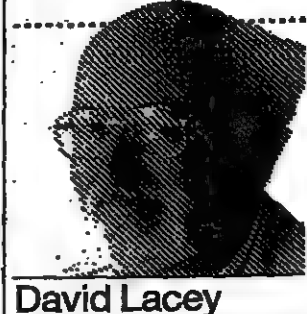
accepting the job was that he should be allowed to choose his coaching staff, and it is no secret that the Lancastrian is a believer in incorporating the experience of top former players into his overall strategy. In Botham he recognises one of the great all-rounders in history. "Just look at what he has to offer," said Lloyd yesterday. "A great swing-bowler and pace bowler, a tremendous technique as a batsman, top-class catcher, great enthusiasm and a never-say-die attitude. It's got to rub off, hasn't it?"

## SPAT MARS THE MARATHON



Five alive... Paul Evans, top, Gary Staines, Jon Solly, Eamonn Martin and Mark Hindspith look forward to competing in tomorrow's race

## Venables plays it all by the book



David Lacey

TERRY Venables publishes his book this week. He last produced one just over 18 months ago, and yet another is due to hit the shelves in the autumn. At this rate Venables will eventually have enough books written by or about him to rival the Old Testament. And he has barely started work on Judges.

ball Association that because of the number of legal actions in which he would be able to devote the amount of time needed to take England into the 1996 World Cup qualifiers. He has insisted he will not change his mind. This, however, has not prevented another upsurge of speculation, fuelled by the absence of an obvious successor, that Venables might yet be persuaded to stay on. For instance, should England win the European Championship, or even play outstandingly well without winning it, there may be a ground swell of public feeling towards that end. Venables remains unequivocal on the matter. "The situation is exactly the same," he said this week, "and there's no reason to think the position will change."



## Seaman sunset strip to stay

THE FA's commercial director Trevor Phillips yesterday called David Seaman's new England kit "a change". But after a "clarification" call from Umbro he agreed it had to stay for two years, writes Martin Thorpe.

## Veterans attack the new wave

Runners accused of lacking desire, writes Duncan Mackay

ON THE eve of the London event, Britain's most successful marathon runner of the past has lashed out at the country's distance athletes for being more interested in money than preparing for major races. "They don't have the focus we had," said Ron Hill, the 1968 European and 1970 Commonwealth champion. "We were focused on winning. But going professional has been bad for the sport. If you are a professional runner you need a pay-day to survive and that means you can't concentrate on the big races."

1970 and Smith 2hr 09min 08sec in 1988. The decline has mirrored Britain's lack of success at the middle-distances in recent years. "I don't understand it," said Hill. "Runners should still be able to do it. We've got the ideal climate to train in and people still have legs. They just need the motivation." Mel Batty, Eamonn Martin's coach, consulted Hill before Martin won the 1993 London Marathon but nobody from the British Athletic Federation has ever contacted Hill or Smith about finding a solution to the problem. "We wouldn't leave any stone unturned," said Hill, renowned for his meticulous approach to training. "But these days people have their own ideas about how to prepare and train."

## Guardian COLLINS Crossword 20,632

A copy of the Collins English Dictionary will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,632, P.O. Box 315, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 2AX, by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday April 29.

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and a form for name and address.

- Blushing, as opposed to pale-skinned in North America (3-5)
11 Incendiary device - put a lot of jewels right into river (5-7)
15 Agitated for lower and upper garments to be shortened (5)
16 What God does comes to an end without concessions being raised (8)
17 Pipe through which blood goes round inside (5)
19 Edward I's hesitating, having no interest (6)
20 Japanese ruler has weapon with horns sawn off (6)
22 Keen on the Spanish pub (5)

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Her opening words were: "You can have no idea how much work is involved in maintaining a private golf course." Simon Hoggart on the Queen

Outlook page 13

صلى الله عليه وسلم



# The Guardian Outlook

On the eve of her 70th birthday, **SIMON HOGGART** argues that many of the woes of the House of Windsor can be laid at the feet of the Queen

## Mother of all our misfortunes

### Inher own words

These two idiots came up behind me and said, 'You're all right' I said I was until you came along - you're upsetting my horse  
*On being shot at with a starting pistol*

Some things stay there, some things go out of the other ear, and some things don't go in at all  
*On meeting prime ministers*

What have we done wrong? We thought that we had brought them up so well  
*On her children*

If the people voted against the monarchy, I would go quietly  
*On republicanism*

The mind does not stick to one... our Teflon monarch.

PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW CHARLES



It's rough being a monarchist these days, especially on the eve of the Queen's 70th birthday. And some of us still are monarchists. There's a myth loved by some on the left, a fantasy which imagines that if we could only abolish the royal family, the nation would be prosperous, cohesive and resurgent once again. Cutting the head off the class system would kill the whole creature, from the greatest dukes down to Hyacinth Bucket. But it's absurd to think that the royals can be blamed for our problems. They go much deeper than that. And the myth ignores the fact that some of the most successful countries in the world, countries we are supposed to admire for their vigour and future are also monarchies: Holland, Belgium, Spain, Japan and most Scandinavian countries, for starters. So, Canada and Australia. Seven of the 15 EU nations have royal heads of state. Constitutional monarchy is a perfectly respectable system of government and has served many countries well. You don't find Japanese people whingeing that the Emperor has held back car exports. The monarch provides an important focus for the great institutions of the land who are - the theory goes - obliged to offer fealty to a symbolic notion of the state rather than to each other. It's one form of the separation of powers, a concept highly esteemed in the United States. Anyone who thinks that sacking the Queen would create a single new job, prevent one crime, or give a poor child a better start in life, is crazed. And what would replace her? Left-of-centre think-tanks may imagine that their ideas would prevail; in fact, we would be stuck with whatever the government of the day thinks would serve it in the short term. But the Windsors? This lot? Do we need them? Are we stuck with this family until they abdicate in bulk, or a mob storms Buckingham Palace? Those questions are worth asking this weekend as the media prepares to bend its collective knee in obedience to the Queen on the eve of her birthday tomorrow, issuing a great, slavering outpouring of sycophancy. To be fair there are subtle psychological reasons for this cascade of toadyism. Like monarchist, back in the recesses of his pickled brain the British press does feel just a tremor of guilt for what it has done to the royals. Concor Crutche O'Brien once said that receiving the attentions of the tabloids was like being picked up and shaken by some drunken hooligan who won't let go. Well, this weekend the hooligans have decided that they ought to be nice, at least, to their victim's old Mum. **N**OR are the woes of the family entirely their fault. None of us could survive the relentless attentions of the press, the knowledge that nothing whatsoever in your life is private, and confidential, the suspicion that your servants may be inspecting your sheets for stains in the hope of selling the information to a paper which will repeat it with all the gusto of the Cup Final result. Whose marriage could survive being lived 'permanently' - on the wrong end of a 1.000mm lens? And yet the Queen must take a measure of the blame. What is astonishing is not how much has changed in the throne, but how little. Coming from a family which was ruthless in re-inventing itself in order to survive (Victoria invented the constitutional monarchy, Edward VIII was sacked for wanting to marry an unpopular woman, on the ludicrous grounds that she had been divorced; do you think that will prevent Charles becoming King if the Windsors decide they can get away with it?) it's amazing she has proved to be. That lack of flexibility stems in part, perhaps, from her apparent willingness to live quite happily in a world of her own, largely unaware of how the rest of us. A friend of

mine found himself seated next to her at one of her regular Buckingham Palace lunches designed to introduce her to interesting people from the world outside. Her opening words, even before "How are you?" were: "You can have no idea how much work is involved in maintaining a private golf course." Her favourite television programme is *The Last Of The Summer Wine*, which similarly bears no relation to the real world. But it does resemble her own life in many ways: elderly people, trapped in a time-war, endlessly discussing meaningless trivia. Much of her reign has been devoted to holding on to the trappings of pomp and circumstance which might have aged, but are they now? The writer Graham Turner recently revealed that the most furious tirade she ever unleashed on a government minister was against Geoffrey Rippon when, as Minister of Housing, had dared allow the new London Hilton to overlook Buckingham Palace. She herself has, admittedly, let some of the ceremonial go hang. For instance, though technically guests at a formal dinner are supposed to finish eating the moment she does, she will push a final round her plate until everyone has had enough. (Princess Margaret is less considerate and a lot more pompous; even at private parties all must down tools when she does, and no one is permitted to go to bed before she does.) The Queen has demonstrated terrific loyalty to the Commonwealth, and there is not a leader of any hue who thinks she is remotely racist - quite a triumph considering her own mother and husband's views on lesser breeds. Yet when I watched her doing a walkabout in Barbados I noticed that she moved from each of the few white faces in the crowd ignoring those in between. It was clearly hurtful and bewildering to the locals. On the other hand, few of them probably knew much about horse racing, which is her first interest. She spends some \$400,000 a year on it. It's hard for anyone under the age of 35 to comprehend just how deferential the media used to be to the royals. No breath of criticism was ever

heard. Now when we are given a minute by minute account of their sexual encounters, we can barely recall a time when we knew absolutely nothing about their private lives except from idealised family portraits which, literally, graced chocolate boxes. The most heavily coded criticism was received with astonished outrage. When writers such as Malcolm Muggeridge and John Grigg suggested that she might draw her staff from a wider social circle, they were physically attacked. Yet despite this enormous shift in public attitude, there has been almost no change at the Palace. The Queen is still surrounded by people who combine upper class confidence with mammoth deference. No one thinks she should employ only Rastafarians or single mums - but a few people from the outside world? Why ever not? The Court remains frozen in time, however, hardly different from the one she inherited. It's astonishing to us now that even a few years ago she assumed the public would happily cough up for the repairs to Windsor Castle. It boggles the mind to think that she only agreed to pay taxes when told she had no choice.

**D**OSS she realise yet just how terrible the crisis of the Windsors has become? That her heir has become a national joke? That the failure of three out of the four marriages so far contracted by her children is a source of despair? That they have swapped majesty for the status of international soap stars? There's no need for pop psychology to explain the problems with relationships suffered by her offspring. We should remember that she received wisdom in the post-war years was that you shouldn't show too much affection to your children, because that would stop them becoming independent. Yet the sight of her not hugging the young Prince Charles on a railway platform after months on a Commonwealth tour still haunts the mind. In his biography the prince told Jonathan Dimbleby that his mother spent only an hour

and a half a day with him when he was a child. The family friend Philip Ziegler says that she was never a "close parent". The extraordinary stoicism she possesses, and on which almost everyone remarks with admiration, may work for a ceremonial head of state but can be disastrous for a mother. By all accounts the relationship with Charles is even more distant now. The two courts have long been bitter rivals. One of his aides recently recalled how almost every time they asked to use the Royal Train, some engagement for the Queen would be trumped up by her courtiers to prevent them. Does this matter? All parents make mistakes, some of them terrible. We can only hope that our children will forgive us. But in a sense, raising happy well-balanced children is the crucial job for the head of any royal family, far more important than opening hospitals and getting briefings from the Prime Minister about the public sector borrowing requirement. Breeding a poised, confident, admired successor is as vital as breeding winners in a racing stable. Little else matters. Yes, Rupert Murdoch and those who have crawled after him are very largely to blame. Countries such as the US and France, whose national symbols are inert objects, may be luckier: there is no danger of the Statue of Liberty having her toes sucked during a talking about sex on bar mobile. But sadly it was the dysfunctional royal family which handed Murdoch his raw material. We can wish the Queen a happy birthday tomorrow, we can pay tribute to her hard work - though not all that much; she has some terrifically long holidays - we can thank her for the skill and experience she has brought to her public engagements. Yet the monarchy, and through it our system of government, is in much worse shape now than it has been since the death of George IV. There is scant enthusiasm for Charles III, and no agreement at all on what might substitute for him. In the middle of tomorrow's eulogies we might just think of tossing a little of the blame towards Her Majesty.

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Crossword 205



# Ending a taboo in schools

**S**HOULD Gordon Brown's name be added to the noble list of education reformers: Crowther, Robbins, Donnison? His diagnosis of the inequalities of British education in the second memorial John Smith lecture in Edinburgh last night was spot on. There was cool analysis, graphic detail and an explicit commitment for change. His prescription leaned in the right direction too but remains too imprecise at present for final judgment. But certainly his speech was a refreshing break from the silence which has engulfed Labour leaders for far too long on what seemed to have become a taboo issue: inequality.

No issue should be more important to a radical party. As Mr Brown set out with passion, denying equal opportunities does not just damage the millions of individuals involved, but British society as a whole. If Britain is to compete in the modern world, it needs a skilled workforce. It does not have one. As a succession of education reformers has recently noted, the last World Economic Forum showed the UK slipping from 14th to 18th in global competitiveness, due mainly to

the quality of the workforce, which has slipped to 24th in terms of skills and 35th in terms of education. The key is not so much more graduates, but better trained school leavers. Sir Claus Moser, the man who rekindled the education debate five years ago, noted this week that Germany, Switzerland and Holland all have 60 per cent or more with intermediate level qualifications compared to Britain's 25 per cent.

Gordon Brown set out some stark existing inequalities: 80 per cent of children of unskilled fathers still leave school at 16, most with no qualifications; the unequal opportunities of children with identical qualifications — children from professional homes being twice as likely to stay on at school and three times as likely to obtain a professional occupation as children of parents doing manual work. No wonder disadvantaged children have a six times poorer chance overall of gaining as good a job as their contemporaries born into professional families.

The biggest scandal of this unequal opportunity is the poor progress achieved since Crowther, Robbins and Donnison reported. It was Crowther in 1959 who found half the national service recruits in the two highest ability groups had left school at 15 with no further education. Robbins, which followed in 1963, showed 45 per cent of children from professional families went on to university, compared to just two per cent from semi-skilled manual homes. Donnison at the end of the decade showed how few children stayed on at school compared to other western states.

The biggest unfairness of the present system is the unequal treatment between the part-time student compared to the full-time, the poor full-time sixth-former (with tiny proportions given tiny amounts of education maintenance allowances) to better-off pupils or short-term YT trainees (£35 a week at 17 but frozen since 1986). Post-16 education remains a lottery of grants, loans and tax reliefs. Like both Borrie's 1994 Commission on Social Justice, which wanted a Learning Bank for Lifetime Learning or the 1983 National Commission on Education, which wanted individual learning accounts, Brown wants more coherence. But he also wants more equity immediately. His idea — given in briefings rather than the speech — would be to redistribute the £700 million in child benefit for 16 to 18-year-olds into education maintenance allowances for the neediest pupils. Poor pupils would end up with much more money; the better-off would lose the benefit. Current maintenance allowances are both arbitrary and inadequate: ranging from a mere £3 a week to £20 with as few as one in 1,000 obtaining them in some counties. A national system is urgently needed. An income-related scheme would mean more support for the less well-off — so long as they stayed in full-time education. But would they? Given the tax allowance component in child benefit, it could even be seen as a necessary tax increase on the better off. This redistributive principle is right; but why not go the whole hog and tax the better off more. Meanwhile, the devil will be in the detail — where the line is drawn.

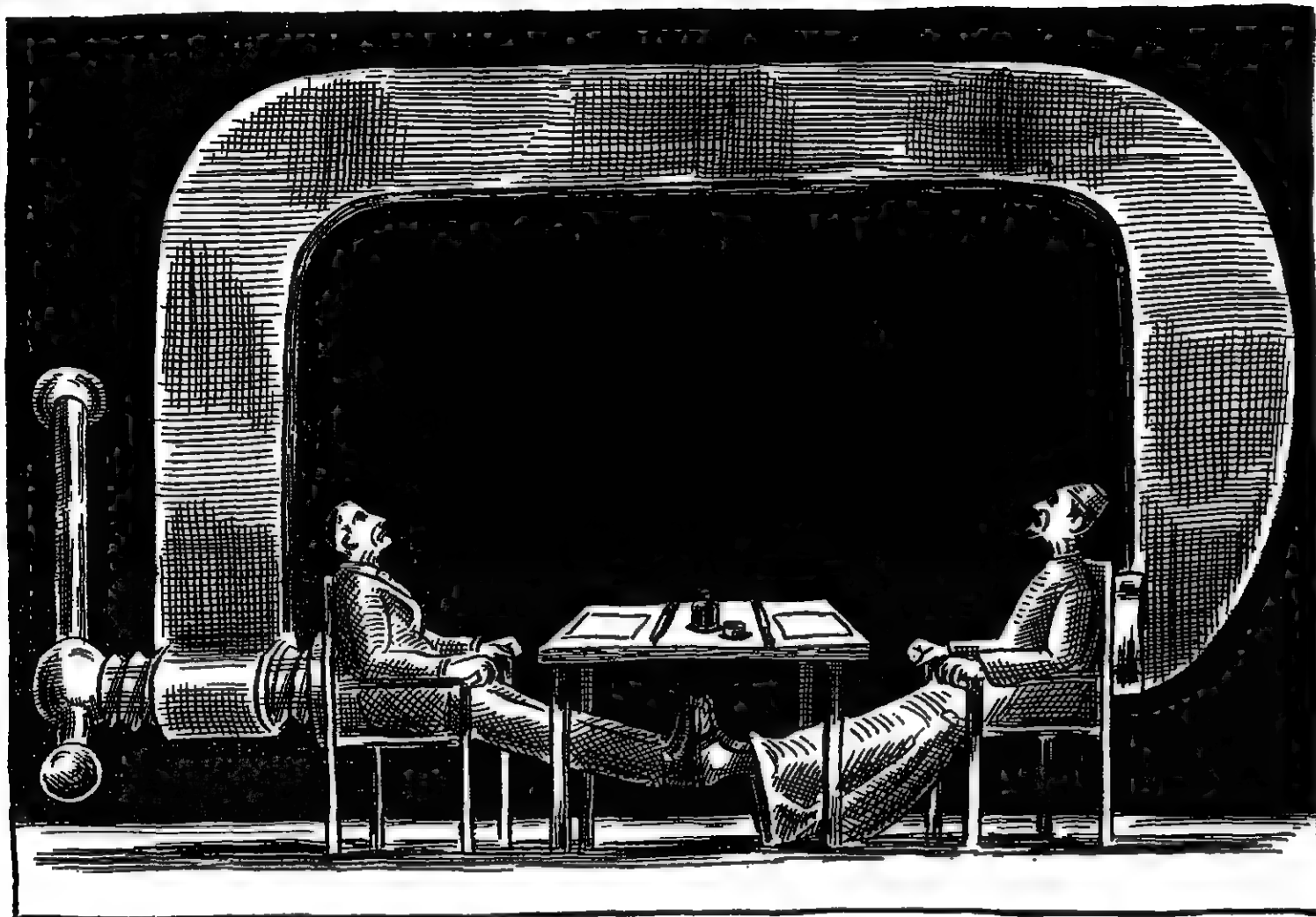
# The bestest of solutions

**T**HE NATION breathed a collective sigh of relief this week when the author formerly known as Her Royal Highness the Duchess of York revealed that she and her newly-divorced husband would remain the "bestest" of friends. Not just the best of friends, nor the very best of friends, but the bestest. You can't get any higher than that short of being such bestest of friends that you might actually think of unscrambling the divorce and living together again. Friends of the former royal wondered also whether she might be taking out a divorce action against the English language by her repeated use of "bestest" — which they fear is a word not very likely to pass the new strictures of the national curriculum. In fact they need not worry. Bestest is not intended as an insidious contemporary anagram like "BSE test". Nor did Fergie invent it. If she had thought it up, doubtless her string of financial advisers would by now have taken a patent out on it.

It is in fact a word with a long English pedigree with its roots based in ancient Greek. Joyce used it in *Ulysses* in 1922 (Since you ask: "Tarnally dog gone my shins if this beent the bestest puttiest longbreakyet") and Shaw dabbled with it as well ("My ownest and bestest..."). But it was S Lysons in *Vulgar Tongue* in 1868 who pointed out that the word "best" is a syncope of short-

ened form of the Greek "beltistos" which, he says, was why his own people in Gloucestershire always stick to "bestest" which is nearest — sorry, nearer — to the original Greek than the modern British pronunciation.

All of this is exceptionally timely. Not, alas for Gloucestershire, but for Sussex. This week Lindfield in West Sussex was banned from the county's best-kept village competition on the dubious grounds that it has won the competition three years in a row. According to yesterday's *Daily Telegraph* (which knows about this sort of thing), the good villagers of Lindfield are so proud of their achievement that some of them even rise at six o'clock each summer morning in order to tidy the streets just in case there is an unannounced spot check by the best-kept village judges. This is understandable because when the village was pitched for its second win, the judges found something (unspecified) in the public toilets which appeared to upset them. It was only after discovering that another competing village had been dumping its rubbish behind the cricket pavilion (there must be a Joanna Trollope novel in this) that Lindfield came up trumps once again. Surely there is a solution to this sorry situation which could appease the wounded pride of Lindfield while at the same time giving other villages a better chance of winning. We hereby call on her former royal highness to declare Lindfield to be the bestest village in the whole of Sussex and leave regular runners-up like Battle and Ditchling to knuckle it out for which is merely the best.



# No pressure, no peace

**Until the Qana camp massacre, Israel had the tacit support of the West as well as a few Arab states for its latest Lebanese adventure. Such cynicism courted disaster, says IAN BLACK. Illustration: PETER TILL**

**"I**F YOU think you understand Lebanon you haven't been properly briefed," authors a jockey poster in the headquarters of Unifil, the UN force whose base at Qana became a charnel house of decapitated babies, severed limbs and charred corpses after Thursday's Israeli artillery attack. Yet there is nothing incomprehensible about the strictly military logic of what happened in those frenzied minutes of shelling: Israeli gunners were simply firing back, with devastating inaccuracy, after Hizbullah

guerrillas loosed off another salvo of Katyusha rockets a few hundred yards away. Nor is there any reason to disbelieve the iconic explanation by the Israeli chief of staff: "We fought Hizbullah... and when they fire on us, we will fire at them to defend ourselves," said General Amnon Shahak. "I don't know of any other rules of the game, either for the army or for civilians." Before Thursday, arguments about Israel's offensive focused on the question of proportion: was it right to use air strikes and artillery barrages against Hizbullah's Katyusha rockets — primitive weapons that have killed 12

Israelis since 1982 but none recently? And was it justified to terrorise 400,000 Lebanese into leaving their homes because of the actions of a handful of guerrillas who enjoy at least passive popular support because — their broader fundamentalist ideology apart — they are fighting to liberate their country from foreign occupation? Israeli attacks on power stations provided a sinister hint that Lebanon's economic recovery after years of civil war would not be allowed to take place if there was no peace in Galilee. By the rules of this dangerous game, a disaster was always possible. Yet until those shells plunged into the Qana base, world reaction had been strikingly low-key: the United States tacitly supported the onslaught while elsewhere Israel enjoyed novel understandings of its right to self-defence even Arab responses were muted. John Major, well-meaning but shallow, appeared to confuse Hizbullah with the IRA and said nothing justified

violence while a peace process (rejected by the Lebanese fighters) was going on. Michael Portillo did not think the Israeli response disproportionate. It is hard to exaggerate the significance of such supportive noises. Since the agreement between Israel and the PLO in September 1993, the Jewish state has broken out of its isolation and re-established ties many countries severed in 1967 or 1973. Before that, coinciding with the end of the cold war, the ideological sting of a century of confrontation was drawn as Zionism and the dispossession and discrimination it represented for Palestinians became less burning issues than ever before. Post-modern Israel worried more about markets than territory as its soldiers tired of *latifa* duty in the alleys of Nablus. Palestinians were emboldened by their successful challenge to the status quo, came to terms with their history and grudgingly accepted that half (or even less) a loaf was better than none. Arabs

elsewhere recognised their societies faced even tougher problems than Israel. And as Israel opened new embassies and old lobbyists abandoned propaganda for trade promotion, wide support for the peace process strengthened the feeling that the world really had changed, that the old conflict was winding down, that there was after all, going to be a happy end. Last November's assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by a right-wing Jew gave peace a martyr while Islamist suicide bombers and dismembered bodies in the shopping malls of Tel Aviv raised the stakes higher. Even Yasser Arafat emerged, de-demonised, and embraced a tacky democracy designed to legitimise — and hopefully develop — the self-rule deal with Israel. And the tectonic plates shifted. Shimon Peres's vision of a "new" Middle East shimmered: the Arab economic boycott faded, secret friendships with Morocco and Jordan came out of the closet and there were public forays to the Gulf. Last month's

"anti-terrorist" summit in Egypt brought Israel and pro-peace Arabs into a new relationship.

Yesterday's abrupt cancellation of a follow-up meeting in Luxembourg symbolised how damaging this week has been. Suddenly the new Middle East looks very much like the old one, except that Israel extinguishing Arab lives in the name of a security that tramples all before it. Yet just as the Sarajevo market massacre galvanised the international community into belated action over Bosnia, Qana may encourage countries which matter, and care, to co-operate more closely. The US and France were urgently coordinating an approach to a ceasefire before the mass killing. But medium-term efforts must focus on fitting the crucial missing pieces into the jigsaw of a comprehensive settlement: Syria's President Hafez al-Assad remains the key regional player, exploiting Lebanon's wild south as his last and only card in the long endgame over the Golan Heights — now almost certainly attainable if Peres's Labour government survives next month's election.

Credible reports of weapons being smuggled into Beirut, Damascus and sent on to the south two weeks ago are more than an incidental detail in a drama that was cynical and complex enough before it took this terrible toll of innocents. It is those two pyramids of baked beans outside Tory Central Office, its sheer vulgarity goes perfectly with the idea of Hezza as Mayor of London, a post which — to judge by what he said on Thursday — he regards as a cut above being deputy to the Boy from Brixton.

You only get the full flavour of it, however, if you are old enough to remember what stood in almost the same place 45 years ago. It was the site of the Festival of Britain, intended by the Attlee government to cheer us up after 12 years of war and austerity. Its centrepiece — apart from the Festival Hall — was the Dome of Discovery, together with an ingenious switch to run for fountain which looked beautiful and sounded like the sea. That event was mocked by the Tories of the day — until they realised what a popular success it was. Goodness knows what those same Tories, most of whom are long dead, would have made of a 500ft Ferris wheel.

But the tragedy is that, allied to what has happened to London's river in the past couple of decades, this piece of swaggering philistinism isn't exceptional. Anyone who takes a boat trip from Westminster pier to Greenwich will see commercial vulgarity run riot, in which each new building along the route outdoes the last in sheer ugliness. One of the worst is a ghastly

# Skyscraping the barrel

## Rattling the bars



Ian Aitken

**W**HOOPEE! It's just what we've always wanted to brighten up our shabby old capital city — a 500ft Ferris wheel right opposite the Mother of Parliaments. It'll be twice as high as Big Ben, so from the top you'll be able to wave to Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells.

Nothing could so precisely encapsulate the low-grade nature of John Major's post-Thatcherite Britain — unless it be those two pyramids of baked beans outside Tory Central Office. Its sheer vulgarity goes perfectly with the idea of Hezza as Mayor of London, a post which — to judge by what he said on Thursday — he regards as a cut above being deputy to the Boy from Brixton.

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hotel built cheek-by-jowl with Tower Bridge and the Tower itself. A few hundred yards further on there is a lumpy brown heap of concrete which resembles the London Zoo's Mappin Terraces, though it is 10 times the size and lacks monkeys.

The few remaining waterside warehouses, though they are derelict and crumbling, are still more elegant than anything that, on present form, is likely to replace them. Perhaps the only consolation is that most of the tatty new buildings won't remain standing for long. But alas, those New Mappin Terraces would probably survive anything short of a nuclear attack. Come, friendly bombs...

TONY Blair's idea of an elected, independent mayor for London raises memories of the distant days when there still was a Greater London Council, and it was actually controlled by the Tories. One day, when Prime Minister Ted got stuck in a traffic jam on the way back to Downing Street after question time, the great man indignantly lifted the phone and ordered the Number 10 switchboard to get the Leader of the GLC on the line.

Now, the Number 10 switchboard has a legendary reputation for finding people, no matter where they may be. It is said that they once contacted a medium when Macmillan tried to phone someone he'd forgotten was dead. So they set about finding the Leader of the GLC for their master.

They eventually raised him, fast asleep in a hotel bed in Tokyo. "Prime Minister for you sir," said the bright voice. And on came an incandescent Ted, ranting on about the chaos in Whitehall. Persons tempted to run for mayor should bear this in mind.

IT IS a bizarre thought, but it is possible that Dr Kallim Stidich, who died this week, might not have suffered his fatal heart attack if he had been in jail for incitement to violence instead of attending an Islamic conference in South Africa. By most people's standards, jail is where he should have been, after repeatedly endorsing the Iranian fatwa against Salman Rushdie and insisting it should be carried out.

The following handwritten sign has been spotted in a north London butcher's window: "Eat our finest Scotch beef — you won't get better."

## Smallweed



**F**OR any young offender facing the classhouse following this week's plans to shove yobboes into military prison, here are some tips from an ex-Royal Fusilier who, with his brother, has been there:

"One little corporal by the name of Smith, who was guarding us, was really terrified at the thought of ghosts, so I used to play on that and frighten the life out of him in the early hours." So successful was the technique that the terrified corporal ended up making cups of tea for the offender to ensure some company during the spooky small hours. This experience, followed by a stretch in Shepton Mallet army nick, did our man and his brother a power of good. Mrs Widdowcome would have been deeply impressed by their subsequent rehabilitation. After National Service, they set up an East End gangland empire. In 1999 both received life sentences on two separate counts of murder. The above and other handy hints on glass-house life can be found in *Born Fighter*, by Reg Kray (Century, 1990).

**P**PRIVATE Rail is a wonderful organism that has spawned dozens of blazer-wearing passenger information types on the concourses of every big terminus; each is charged with explaining that he is unable to answer the query of the moment because it falls within the bailiwick of (a) another company or (b) Railtrack. He could learn from the complaints-handling procedure of a long-ago American railway management, whose "confidence-rebuilding measures" may incidentally teach MAFF a thing or two on reassuring a public scared by differently-intellected cattle. The story surfaced in a newspaper letters column — a British traveller told how he had written to the above-mentioned company, complaining of a restless night in a sleeping car, the restlessness caused by repeated attacks from

fleas. A letter winged back from the office of the company president, expressing shock and horror. It listed the remedial measures taken: the coach had been identified and immediately withdrawn, then shunted to the repair yard, where it had been stripped to the chassis. Furnishings, woodwork and upholstery had been incinerated. Our complainant had been deeply impressed by American efficiency until, on disposing of the envelope, he discovered inside a slip of paper bearing the scribbled message: "Cindy — send this guy the bug note." Nine years ago, Dame Iris Murdoch — forewarned, perhaps, of the downpour of millennial newsgery and risible rectitude that would drizzle the current decade — constructed a scene in *The Book and the Brother-*

hood (Chatto and Windus, 1987) in which a character, Rose Curdland, faced with a shiny-eyed radical-change merchant, declares: "I hope and believe that in what remains of my lifetime I shall still be able to go out and buy half a pound of butter and a copy of the Times." Either Rose's fictional life ended shortly after publication, or she will have been grievously disappointed. Butter is, courtesy of the Belgian Empire, no longer sold in half-pounds. There remains a publication called the Times, but it may not be quite what Rose had in mind. To banish the shock of the new associated with re-reading even quite recent works such as this, Smallweed proposes a Fictional Nomenclature (Compulsory Updating) Bill, requiring publishers to ensure that both book titles and contents march with the times. We are not talk-

ing merely about metrication and officialise, although both Ray Bradbury's *Centigrade 233* and Allan Mawalan's *Ice Station Zebra* are long overdue. Nor will the measure be confined to novels; poetry must do its bit, even if The Spring Bank Holiday Weddings will have P A Larkin rotating in his grave. Cinema too: with the demise of Maida Vale, Ray Milland will have to Dial 0171 372 6046 for Murder. And political correctness surely demands Humphrey Bogart sits out the second world war in Dar el Seida.

**C**URCHWARDENS, an inoffensive enough bunch of people, may, we fear, be the latest targets for strength through Joy (otherwise known as the Health of the Nation Fitness Drive). The Government's "suggestion" that non-smoking ought to be the

"norm" in enclosed public places (does anyone else find peculiar the idea of these misfits laying down "norms" of any description?) bodes ill for the wardens and their pipes.

It had been our understanding that the two perks of the job were the power of arrest (within church precincts) and the right to spark up in church. Places of worship are undeniably enclosed public spaces, but Church House is, as they say, relaxed. A spokesman explained there is nothing in canon law conferring smoking rights, although he added the heartening news that there is "no blanket ban" on anyone fling up in an Anglican church. Smallweed turned to our ecclesiastical historian, Cambridge's Reverend Professor Owen Chadwick, for a definitive ruling. Smacking by anyone in church, he said, would almost cer-

tainly be considered "indecorous behaviour". Ah. But hard-bitten addicts in the Italian Catholic priesthood, he recalled, had found a way around such censoriousness: snuff.

**P**RINCE Edward may be snoring in the towel on the class system, but Brazilian royalty is made of sterner stuff. The last emperor, Pedro II, was hoisted out in 1889, but the Orleans and Braganza family, no doubt cheered by the 13-odd per cent pro-restoration share of a 1993 referendum, may be playing a long game. Not only does it boast its very own environment-loving prince, Joao, but someone is going to have to be head of the Portuguese commonwealth, currently under construction. Portugal, alas, is a republic, as is every other member. At the moment, that is, *Viva O Imperator!*

JANUO 1996



Shirt sharp shock actics

Soccer Diary

Activity Charge

Dear heart... will be... week... do some... danger...

Dear heart... will be... week... do some... danger...

Dear heart... will be... week... do some... danger...

Dear heart... will be... week... do some... danger...

Dear heart... will be... week... do some... danger...

Dear heart... will be... week... do some... danger...

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# A reunion of the Unions



Martin Kettle

THE Queen's 70th birthday is marked this weekend with muted cheers, that of her most loyal subject in Paisley passed almost entirely unremarked a fortnight ago. Yet the sight of the Big Man at 70 makes you think. He can't boom on forever. And because he can't, an important moment is approaching Northern Ireland politics.

The sticking point is about Northern Ireland's unhedged right to decide whether to remain within the Union

tainly be David Trimble's Ulster Unionist. This is an important prospect. The divisions of Unionism have been a leitmotif of the Ulster situation for nearly a quarter of a century, ever since the old Ulster Unionist Party split in the early seventies over direct rule. That split eventually hardened into the current DUP-DUP divide.

This is all hypothetical. But it is a mistake not to realise that Trimble has a serious strategy for placing Unionism at the centre of Northern Ireland life once again. And it would be a mistake not to grasp that this strategy has dramatic implications for the climactic next few weeks of the embattled peace process.

Something else of importance has changed too. When the peace process started in 1995, Britain had a government with a majority of 21. Today it has a government with a majority of one. Not only does

this mean that the Government's ability to deliver at Westminster is no longer in its own hands, it also marks a wider diminishing of that government's authority as a negotiator.

The Irish government faces the self-same problem. Like its London counterpart, it is increasingly a lame duck administration. Finance Fall strengthens Fine Gael's expense all the while, and the Irish Labour Party has been humiliated in recent by-elections. In other words, both John Major and John Bruton come to the negotiating table with everyone aware that their successors are hovering outside the door.

Even the Americans, who for many months have provided the momentum for underwritten the process, may not now be quite as reliable as before. Bill Clinton's time is limited; after November, if no longer matters, The White House is much less interested in Ireland since the end of the ceasefire, and in any case it now has bigger crises to deal with in the Middle East.

Yet against all this must be set the fact that the process goes on. In spite of another IRA bomb in London this week, the Government launched its bill to enable Northern Ireland to hold pre-negotiation elections in six weeks time. Few now expect those elections — which appeared so bitterly controversial when they were announced only a few weeks ago — to be boycotted either by the nationalist SDLP or even by Sinn Féin.

And this is not the only surprise. Privately, there is a remarkably ready acceptance among politicians of differing stripes that the IRA will set off a few bangs and then make a crowd-pleasing announcement of something approximating to a ceasefire as the May 30 polling day nears. Even more striking is the politicians' recognition that they will get away with it. Sinn Féin's bitterest foes believe that Gerry Adams and his team are likely, in the end, to turn up with a mangled flag and talk on June 10 and that, after a lot of complex choreography to avoid embarrassing public encounters, they will all end up inside the same building on the same day.

Too optimistic? Quite possibly. But in any case, that is what the reality hard news is supposed to start. That first session on June 10 is increasingly billed as the long-deferred moment of truth. For this is when, according to the script, Sinn Féin will have to say where they stand on the decommissioning proposals and the six principles on democracy and non-violence set out in the Mitchell report as the basis for further talks.

And then? Well, put this way. In the end it is Britain, not the Unionists, who are more fussed about decommissioning and the rest. The real sticking point is about Northern Ireland's unhedged right to decide whether to remain within the Union. This, as always, is the crux issue.

And certainly, anyone who believes that Trimble, let alone Paisley or Adams, can ultimately compromise on that is genuinely deluding themselves. The crunch may not come on day one. But it is inevitably bound to come, and it can now be called before long. Strangely, one begins to sense that this may actually be the outcome which suits most people best. It is increasingly obvious that Tony Blair does not want to inherit a walking wounded peace process. Deep down, the Irish government may now feel that enough is enough too. For the IRA, the strains of peace-making without peace have clearly proved too demanding. They, like the nationalist politicians, may take refuge in the expectation that Catholic Northern Ireland will now lie back and braid its hair. In Paisley's words, a third vote, claiming another great triumph over the Antichrist. And David Trimble? As he knows better than anyone, time is on his side too.



Glued to be gay? Lisa Grant and Jill Percey at home and (below) a mass homosexual wedding in Trafalgar Square

PHOTOGRAPHS: BEAN SMITH (above) and ISON TOLHURST

# Marriage of inconvenience

## Queen Beatrix (left) disapproves but Holland and Hawaii are set to legalise same-sex marriage. ALEX SPILLIUS meets a gay couple and predicts that if we don't change, European law will



JILL PERCEY and Lisa Grant have everything in common with the most run-of-the-mill heterosexual couple apart from two things: they never argue and they are forbidden to marry. As lesbians, their love does not — cannot — speak its name in a Register Office.

Nonetheless, they have held a self-devised "wedding" consisting of readings from favourite poems and an exchange of gold rings over vows composed themselves, before a small gathering of family and friends. "We wanted to make a public statement that we were committed to each other," says Jill. "I have taken vows and I wear a ring. Lisa has made promises to me, I have made promises to her. As far as I am concerned, I am married." But not in the eyes of the law. At least not in Britain.

Of the 15 European Union states, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands already grant same-sex couples limited legal recognition, but the Dutch parliament took the issue of gay marriage rights into account this week when it voted to allow same-sex partners to marry.

Barring an extraordinary intervention by the cabinet or Queen Beatrix — who is expected to be horrified by the idea — the decision should be ratified within a year. Meanwhile the supreme court in Hawaii has ruled that the islands' ban on gay mar-

riage is unconstitutional. If a challenge by the state of Hawaii attempting to uphold the ban fails, the rest of the US, reactionaries deep south and all, would probably be forced to follow suit.

The implications of the Dutch vote, in particular, are enormous. Presently, a married heterosexual Dutch couple residing in Britain are recognised as such in UK law. Would the same apply to a homosexual Dutch couple legally wed in their own country?

If the prediction of gay activists also materialised — that hundreds of British gay and lesbian couples would hop over to Amsterdam for instant legal weddings — that raises another enormous question: would the UK authorities then have to acknowledge their bond as they currently do in the case of a straight couple married abroad?

The Dutch are a little touchy on this point, fearing their reputation for liberal excess in the eyes of disapproving neighbours would merely lurch from drugs to marriage tourism. A spokesperson at the London embassy firmly stated that foreigners required a legal residence permit — commonly granted after three months — before they can marry, but the view at the consulate was that some munificent politicians might be less bureaucratic than others.

It is not hard to envisage a radical town hall quickly gaining renown among gay com-

munities across Europe as the place to tie the knot. Imagine the faces of Britain's great and good when forced to recognise — probably after an extended judicial process ending at the European Court of Human Rights — the nation's first legally wed gay couple. Imagine the headlines.

The dispute that may yet carry Jill and Lisa to Strasbourg has strong similarities. Lisa, a 28-year-old clerical office worker for British Rail, will soon meet her employer at an industrial tribunal. As the right-wing press has gleefully noted, she will be represented by Cherie Booth, who will argue on Lisa's behalf that her partner should be granted the same travel perks as spouses of heterosexual employees.

BR's rejection of her claim would perhaps be justified if Jill and Lisa's partnership did not constitute a family. But that begs the highly fraught question: what is a family? Two people living together, committed to each other for life, with a cat and three dogs — one of which awkwardly delights in licking my writing hand at great length — so Jill and Lisa are, might seem a perfectly functional definition.

"We are so normal it's not true," says Jill, aged 36, who is a mess at Winchester General Hospital. "We get up, go to work, pay our taxes, come home, and go to bed. We used to go to the local for the pub quiz but we don't even do that any more."



Home is a cosy, two-bedroomed townhouse in Eastleigh with a decorative theme dominated by animals — pictures, wall hangings, models and plates depicting little furry things abound. In the three years since they met, Lisa has converted Jill to football, and every other evening is spent on the sofa in front of a match.

"People think that being gay is only about sex. But there are so many couples like us who just get on with life quietly. We didn't plan to get involved in a legal case, it just happened."

For gays and lesbians, the marriage issue is much more about equality under the law than the right to walk down the aisle; about the dull benefits of wedlock such as tax allowance, transferable pensions and property inheritance, not to mention joint membership of

the local gym. As things stand, if one partner in a same-sex couple of 20 or 30 years dies, the other would have no claims whatsoever, other than through a will.

Jill and Lisa have adopted a little-known device which is gaining popularity in the community, called "enduring power of attorney", by which each partner is effectively nominated as next of kin in the presence of a lawyer.

Every year a thousand or so "wedding" ceremonies are conducted, chiefly through the auspices of the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association and the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement. Around 65 per cent of the latter organisation's blessings are held for lesbian couples. As Jill quipped: "What do lesbians do on their second date? They

move in together." It is unlikely, however, that thousands of same-sex couples would immediately rush to the altar in the event of legislation.

"Many gays would reject it as they would see it as buying into straight society," comments Mark Watson, who is in charge of partnership issues at Stonewall, the gay rights pressure group. "We are talking about the conservative end of the gay spectrum, people who want a mortgage and to watch videos on a Saturday night, not techno bunnies on Ecstasy, and we're talking about people who would like gay people to be doing — having stable relationships. Both political parties are pushing for long, stable, monogamous relationships in society — why shouldn't we see gay?"

For David, a London management consultant in his thirties, it was particularly galling to attend two weddings recently of old heterosexual friends, who had spent their twenties swearing they would never marry, and both of whom had been with their partners for less than the five years he has been with this Brazilian boyfriend, Joao. "The issue is extra-sensitive because Joao, who has studied and worked here for nine years, is facing deportation. Marriage, of course, would instantly solve the problem."

The logic of a single Europe suggests that in the next century homosexual marriages will be permitted across the EU. Undoubtedly it would produce a major stink from right-wing politicians and newspapers, and the church. But Jill at least is convinced that opposition would fade quickly.

"I think attitudes are changing. Sure, there is discrimination in the workplace, but I have never been abused or harassed because of being gay. I am completely out at work and there is no stigma at all. The neighbours have never been a problem. It's just not as unpopular an issue as people make out."

# A sad case of top order collapse

We humiliate and revile our leaders. And sport is no longer the only culprit, says RICHARD WILLIAMS

IF THE game of cricket could be said to justify its continued existence by providing a convenient running metaphor for the condition of the country, this week's noisy election for the two vacant places on the England cricket committee surely symbolised the contemporary crisis of national leadership.

The chairman of the selectors resumes his duties this weekend at the head of a five-strong committee including one fellow who recently tried to usurp him, another whose appointment he attempted to veto, a third with whom his relationship became fraught during last winter's stumps, and a fourth whose status as an active player should, in the chair-

man's view, have disbarred him from consideration. The surprise is that eight same men could be found to compete so vigorously for the two vacant seats. After all, the fate of a successful candidate is practically guaranteed. After a couple of defeats, he finds himself caricatured on the back pages as a vegetable. Then the fun goes out of it when



some long-gone romantic indiscretion is paraded across the front page. But most people would agree that the England cricket team, which has won only 19 of its last 100 Test matches, is getting the leadership it deserves. In this, the cricketers share the malaise of the England football team, which has not won a tournament in 30 years and now, as it prepares to contest the forthcoming European Championship on

home turf, finds itself under the supervision of a man whose stewardship has been undermined by allegations of financial impropriety.

In rugby, although the statistical record is better (the England team failed to reach the final of last summer's World Cup, but won this winter's Triple Crown), the mood is no better. For most of last winter the management seemed at odds with its own players. And the Davis Cup tennis team? Don't even ask.

But then in what area does Britain enjoy leadership that can be described as satisfactory? The monarch and the ruling political party represent a serious embarrassment to anyone representing Britain abroad. The established church, having abdicated its duty of moral leadership, has all but physically vanished. The judiciary is compromised by politics. The Bank of England and Lloyd's of London no longer represent financial probity. The public utilities are run by the "find-the-lady" card-trickster gangs who hang out in Oxford Street. (Nor, I hasten to add, would one wish to claim any special virtue on behalf of the management of national newspapers, whose selection of editors is often quixotic and calamitous.) And Tony Blair, you say? Impossible to judge until he is given real responsibility.

Leaders do exist, people of imagination, temperate voices and sensible judgment. God only knows why the Church of England is not headed by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, Jim Thompson, and his colleague at Oxford, Richard Harries, whose civilised doubts and certainties are instead disseminated via the Today programme.

Such people even exist within sport, although they are usually found in the branches where individualism is rewarded. A different application of the talents of Frank Williams, Patrick Head and Ron Dennis — the men behind the grand prize cars of Formula One, Prost and Damon Hill — would probably transform British industry. In only one respect does the management of the cricket team provide an encouraging, if perverse, lesson. When they appointed Illingworth, a hotly-handled son of Yorkshire, the results were no better than they had been under a Home Counties toff, E R Dexter. Perhaps the equality of failure demonstrates that this is, as Prince Edward insists, a classless country after all.



# Transports of delight

TWO myths need to be addressed in your coverage of Labour's transport policy, or rather the Transport 2000 policy which appears to have been labelled as a product of the Labour Party (Labour targets company cars, April 18). The first is that company cars are under-taxed, the second that Labour can shift expenditure from roads to other forms of transport where investment is desperately needed.

Company cars are taxed on the basis of personal benefit — our own detailed assessment of running costs shows clearly that the current rates do represent what a driver would have to had paid him, or her, self in order to run an equivalent private car. That is precisely the aim of taxing benefits in kind. There remains, nonetheless, a legitimate concern about the way in which the current system encourages drivers to reach 18,000 business miles in order to reduce the tax paid.

The roads programme has been cut massively over recent years. Initially, the main victim was the bypass programme which, if done properly, can bring social and environmental benefits to communities suffering from heavy traffic. Now, however, the main victim is such that road maintenance and local road safety schemes are disappearing.

The lack of maintenance in particular is merely building up bigger bills for later. Any suggestion that what remains can be moved to other investment is dangerously misleading and ignores the desperate need for massive and new investment in transport.

(Dr) Jeremy Vanke, Head of Public Policy, RAC Motoring Services, 14 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5BL.

own car for "business purposes" you can claim expenses of 40p per mile or more — an outrageous sum which, again, stimulates unnecessary trips. The incremental cost of each journey is very low, especially if you have free parking. A charge on business parking spaces is an excellent idea. Rik Andrew.

Vice-chair, Transport Working Party, Local Agenda 21 (Richmond), 82 Elm Grove Road, London SW13 0BS.

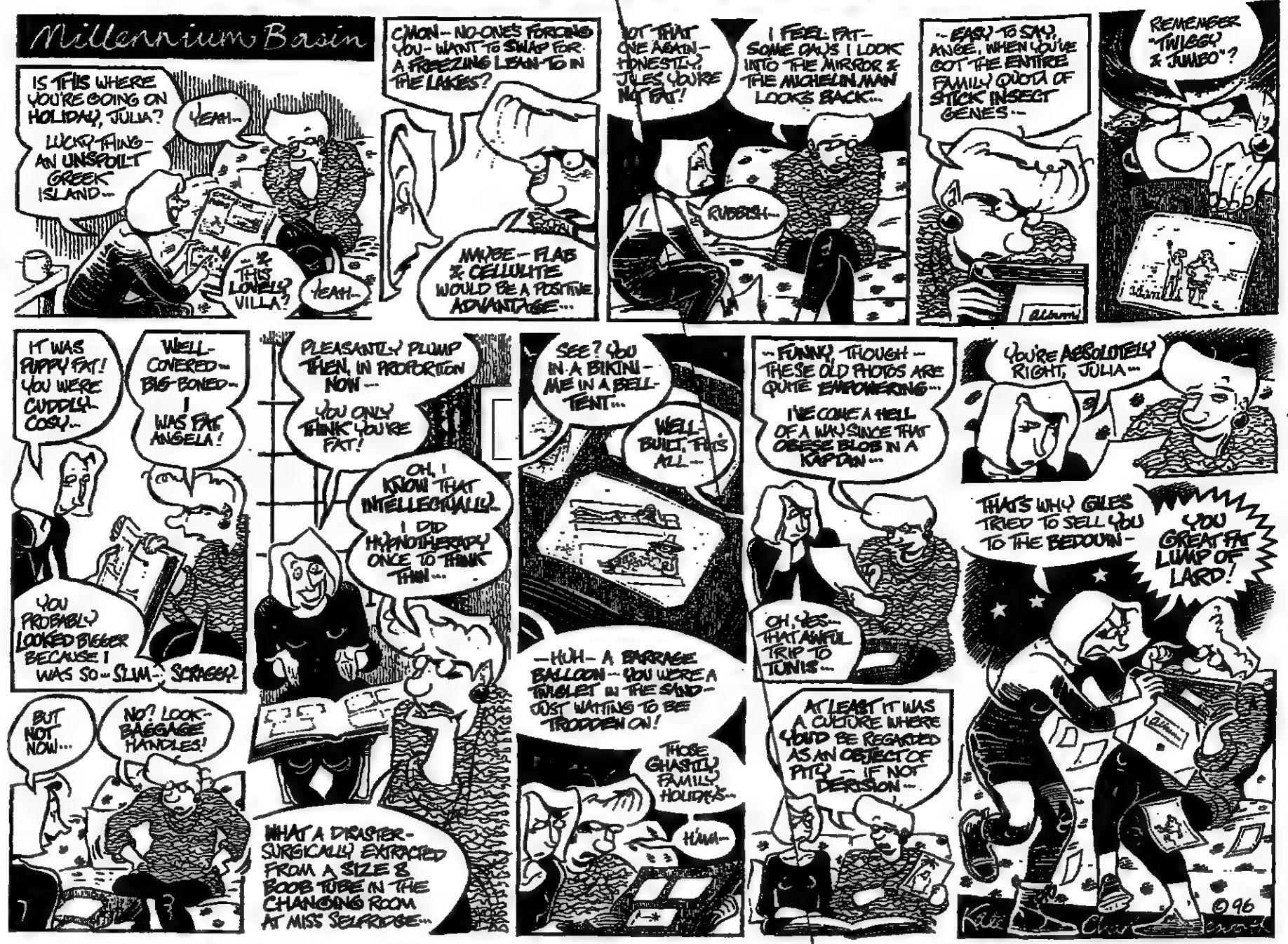
THE proposals outlined in your report go no where far enough. It is high time to invoke the principle of "the polluter pays". Almost every town and city in the UK has areas of poor air quality caused by cars. High levels of tropospheric ozone — a secondary, extremely-toxic pollutant formed by sunlight acting on car exhausts — affects vast areas of the countryside and the South-east is one of the worst affected areas. In the same way that smokers pay a lot of tax for a habit that poisons them, it is only just that motorists should pay a lot more for the damage they cause to all our health.

Charles Trounwell, 40 Springfield Road, Brighton BN1 6DG.

OF COURSE the car industry is worried by any plans to reduce its dominance over transport policy. Yet if the needs of this industry were a little more forward-looking they would see not economic disaster but opportunity.

Instead of producing and selling the environmentally-hostile executive car, smaller electric models could be developed to transport people to and from train stations, cheap and efficient minibuses could be developed for local transport systems, and manufacturers could even compensate for lost profits by creating a new market for high-tech bicycles.

The main problem with such proposals is not that they are unworkable but that they lack the fun and glamour which car advertising still manages to associate with buying and running a car. This could be overcome by using the vast sums currently spent on marketing and advertising cars to promote, improve and even glamorise, public transport. Sumant Ghose, 17 Warren Street, London W1P 8DB.



## Nine missiles aimed at Israel

DO the Israelis ever pause to wonder why places like Ain el-Hilweh camp, which they bombed this week, contain many Hizbullah supporters? I visited Ain el-Hilweh — and Bourj al-Berajneh and Shatila camps — in November. I met families squatting in tiny one-room homes in a dilapidated hospital building; more than 100 families, with five toilets, five cookers, and five sinks between them, fetching their water from a tap outside. I saw people living in bombed buildings with no external walls. Lebanon's Palestinian refugees must be some of the world's most marginalised people. Most are effectively stateless; they have minimal access to employment, their housing conditions are appalling, and the dread of eviction ever-present. They also have an achingly powerful dream of the home where they, or their parents or grandparents, once lived. And they have been watching a peace process unfold south of the border which seem to ignore their plight.

Of course supporting Hizbullah seems attractive — 50 years on, no one else seems to be offering them any hope of things ever changing. Bombing Ain el-Hilweh does not change anything either — it just increases hatred all round.

Fat Simmons, 60 Quarry Road, Readington, Oxford OX3 8NX.

that listening was done in the dark, as Israeli rockets had destroyed two power stations in Beirut. I stood in the Bekaa valley and watched Israeli war planes circling overhead throughout the day, seeking their targets and watching their destruction — unchallenged, for Lebanon has no air force.

ONCE again the shameful double standards of the West in its treatment of the two sides in the Arab-Israeli conflict have become all too transparent.

Dr) Navidal Haq Khan, 370 D A Turner Hospital, Gubbins Lane, Romford, Essex.

THE killings of civilians by the Israelis has elicited no condemnation from the Jewish and Christian leaders who were very quick to demand rich action from Muslim leaders when Jewish blood was split. It seems that, for the Jews and Christians and their secular friends, Muslim blood counts for nothing.

Abmed Verat, Editor, The Muslim News, PO Box 380, Harrow, Middx HA2 6LL.

MICHAEL Portillo said on Monday, in support of Israel, that "every nation is entitled to security". Can he explain why Lebanon does not have that right? During the last 20 years, the number of people killed in Israel by double launched from Lebanon is less than 100. The number in Lebanon killed by Israeli military action over the same period is more than 10,000. Israeli troops continue to occupy hundreds of square kilometres of Lebanese territory, in violation of international law and specific UN resolutions. Lebanon occupies zero square kilometres of Israeli territory.

On any objective assessment, it is not Israel but Lebanon whose security is threatened. By its current massive and illegal bombardment, Israel is again holding the entire population and territory of Lebanon hostage for the actions of Hizbullah. This is not a legitimate response to terrorism — it is the practice of terrorism on a huge scale by the Israeli state.

Chris D A Turner, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NF.

FOLLOWING Michael Portillo's logic, can we now expect the British government to sanction air strikes against Israel in response to the next bomb planted by the IRA? Arun Arora, 144 Selly Park Road, Birmingham B39 7LE.

ISRAEL occupies part of the West Bank of the Jordan; surely the Lebanese people have a right to oppose that occupation. The scenario could be applied to Britain during the second world war, had Hitler occupied these shores. Surely no one would argue against the idea that we would have been morally justified to fight against German occupation? Susan Spilling, 44 Sussex Road, Harrow, Middx HA1 4LE.

WHO changed the rules? During the 1939-45 war, we considered the French Muslims as heroes for resisting the German occupation of their land, despite the fact that the French government had capitulated to the Germans. The Israelis have been occupying southern Lebanon contrary to a UN resolution, and therefore the inhabitants of Lebanon have every right to expect our full support in resisting it. Kathleen Alexander, 103 Lake Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 4LE.

IN FEBRUARY this year, the United States condemned Cuba (against the evidence) for defending itself against dangerous incursions into its airspace. Now it is in favour of Israel's right to "defend" itself against Lebanese civilians. Would someone from the US embassy like to explain this inconsistent policy behaviour? Elizabeth Bird, 53 Moggan Park, Portsmouth, Co Armagh BT63 3QN.

YOUR Diary (April 18) suggests that Paul Fisher, Railtrack's chief surveyor, was exercising prudence when seen, allegedly at Suffolk Walden, entering a first-class train carriage. Mr Fisher must be even more privileged than you seem to realise: the only railway serving Suffolk Walden closed in 1984. Michael J Smith, 10 Hillview, Swinstead, Norfolk PE27 8LA.

THE Orange Prize for fiction is not Britain's biggest literary award (When words fall, April 16). Since its inception in 1983, the British Literature Prize has in fact been the most valuable prize in Britain, worth £40,000. Gary McKee, The Arts Council, Acting Literature Director, 14 Great Park Street, London SW1P 3NQ.

Letters to the Editor may be sent to 0171 837 4530 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk. Please include a full postal address and daytime telephone number, even in e-mailed letters. We may edit shorter ones are more likely to appear.

## More income tax please, we're British

WHILE the Labour Party should in no way be committed to specific tax proposals before taking office, it is of vital importance to make it clear that the principle of progressive taxation and the objective of social justice have by no means been discarded and are fundamental to our purpose (Short's tax remarks embarrass Labour, April 15).

After 17 years of Conservative governments have increased inequality more than in any other European country and gravely eroded basic services, we wish to restate our commitment to a fair tax system. Those who can afford to pay must make a contribution commensurate with the benefits they receive towards the social costs which are essential to the creation of a just society.

It is in the interest of us all to reverse the trend towards a more divided, alienated and crisis-ridden society. This will not be possible if we refuse to challenge the idea of cutting taxes to benefit those already well-off and neglecting the rest. Stan Newens MEP, Hugh Kerr MEP, Alex Falconer MEP, David Morris MEP, Michael Hendry MEP, Ken Coates MEP, Norman West MEP, Alf Lomas MEP, 92 Ladbroke Grove, London W11 2HE.

IT IS not the amount of tax I pay that troubles me but whether this government is giving me value for money. Labour should speak up. D Johnson, 10 Richmond Avenue, Bognor Regis PO21 2YE.

## Nice work if you can get it

YOUR correspondent Peter Rose, press secretary to the Nolan Committee, is substantially wrong about payments to quango members when he states "They are not paid at present, except for the chief executive when on the board" (Letters, April 18). A glance at the standard application form and accompanying notes published by the Cabinet Office Public Appointments Unit, which nominates prospective quango members, reveals that this is not the case. A list published by the unit states that "Most are part-time (one to two days a month) and unpaid, though travelling and other expenses (eg for childcare) are paid. A few are paid — and some full-time." A covering letter issued by the unit further reveals that other quango members are paid an honorarium, and confirms that "some, however, do require a substantial commitment of time and are paid."

The HMSO annual publication, Public Bodies, which lists hundreds of quangos — including some major local and regional bodies — goes into detail about the numerous board members who do in fact receive payment, sometimes substantial, for their services. David Northmore, c/o Cassell Publishing Ltd, 125 Strand, London WC2R 0BB.

## A Country Diary

MACHYNLEITE: Our willow warblers and our shelducks both arrived this week. The warblers had flown maybe 3,000 miles from southern Africa. The shelducks had come only a few hundred yards from the estuary. But for both it meant the start of the breeding season. For a few weeks the willow warblers will fill the trees with busy chirping. The shelducks' contribution to the chorus will be less musical but just as much a part of the woodland spring as they fly between the leafless oaks to land in grassy clearings in parties of up to a dozen or so. One morning I concealed myself in a thicket by one of their favourite trysting places and waited for them; and very soon they came circling over the wood, making a careful reconnaissance before fluttering down to stand a minute or two in watchful silence. Then began their courtship rituals among the wood anemones and the springing bluebell leaves. Necks lowered, heads

HURRAY for Clare Short. It's good to pay taxes — it gives us roads, schools, hospitals, disposes of our rubbish, and generally makes life livable. This is a rich society, yet there is still poverty. I don't mind if the rich have big incomes. I do mind that they do not pay enough tax. Society contributes so much more to them, why shouldn't they contribute more to society? Tom James, 64 Monnow Street, Monmouth NP25 5EN.

As pensioners (on index-linked pensions), we have brought up three daughters who attended excellent schools, free of charge, and have benefited greatly from the NHS. This government has taxed the poor unfairly through VAT instead of graduating tax by income. We should be prepared to contribute to essential services for all by a higher income tax system. Ian and Joyce Doughty, 238 Uxbridge Road, Hampton Hill, Middlesex TW12 1AY.

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## In defence of the defence

BESIDES the possibility of a prison, serious questions remain after the Mawhinney defendants' trial (April 17). On their own admission, the prosecution threw unprecedented resources at what was, in their view, an open and shut case. Where, other than in terrorist and murder cases, does the CPS allocate a special case-worker and carry out forensic experiments on pots of paint and shabby suits? Was it any-

thing to do with police embarrassment at taking 30 minutes to respond to a 999 call by an MP outside Parliament on the day of the Queen's Speech? Do the victims of race-related attacks have their cases investigated with the same diligence? Michael Schwarz, Bindman and Partners, (Solicitors of Mawhinney defendants), 275 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 9DF.

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## Shelf lifeless

AS some of your readers may be aware, WH Smith's have recently withdrawn from their shelves well over 100 publications in the interests of maximising their profits, including Tribune, Labour's left-wing weekly. The chairman of WH Smith's, when members of the Tribune board met with him, refused to acknowledge that his company had any responsibility to help maintain a diverse press in the United Kingdom. This careless attitude is made all the more bizarre by the fact that it has just been revealed they are currently running a promotion of Mein Kampf in 70 of their stores and defending this in the name of free speech. This is clear illustration of WH Smith's seriously misguided and dangerous sense of judgment in these matters.

It leads only to the conclusion that we require in the UK similar legislation as in France, where the whole of the press is guaranteed access to newsagents' shelves. Peter Hain MP, Chairman, Glyn Ford MEP, 48 Stanfords Road, Molesey, Lancashire OL5 0BE.

## Finally, but no father forward

FATHERING should not just take place within the home or between the biological father and his children (Letters, April 18). Historical research suggests, for example, that in pre-industrial London, children were part of a large network of carers not necessarily related by blood who acted as role models.

Even in families where the parents are together, the biological father alone is simply too narrow a role model for children to learn a balanced view of adult life. Children do need fathers, but they also need grandfathers, godfathers and other male friends. Mark Dudge, Director, Nursery Schools Research Unit, University of Brighton, Lewes Road, Brighton BN2 5AT.

## Train of thought

YOUR Diary (April 18) suggests that Paul Fisher, Railtrack's chief surveyor, was exercising prudence when seen, allegedly at Suffolk Walden, entering a first-class train carriage. Mr Fisher must be even more privileged than you seem to realise: the only railway serving Suffolk Walden closed in 1984. Michael J Smith, 10 Hillview, Swinstead, Norfolk PE27 8LA.

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# Regrets? Too few to mention

## PHILIP HENSHER grew to like his job as a House of Commons clerk — until he was sacked



A novel experience... Philip Hensher

PHILIP HENSHER was a parliamentary clerk when he gave a brief interview to *Attitude*, the glossy monthly magazine for homosexual men, shortly before publication of his new novel, *Kitchen Venom*, which is about a Conservative MP and a male prostitute. Among other questions, the magazine asked him: "How many sexy MPs are there?" He was quoted as replying: "More than in the general population. About 60? There's a slight bias towards the Tories."

because lots of poof's adore Mrs Thatcher." Asked: "Who is the most fanciable MP?" he mentioned one, and said: "It's his shaggy-out look I like." Asked about another MP, he said: "He's got very short legs, his torso goes down to his knees... Generally MPs are unusually light."

IN THE end, I worked for the House of Commons for about five and a half years. It was at least three years longer than I'd intended to, and a good deal longer than I'd expected to have my presence endured by the authorities. I'd never had much in the way of loyalty or respect for most of the people I worked for.

PHD and a badly liked enthusiasm for advertising and management consultancy is not much of a bet in the job stakes. What these dubious qualifications did, apparently, fit me for was becoming a House of Commons clerk.

graciful. I know, to write novels at the taxpayer's expense. Kitchen Venom, as it finally became, certainly isn't an attempt to outrage, and I doubt it would shock anyone who wasn't a clerk. I was struck by how close clerks were to the great, and how little they know. Behind the concealing mask of anonymity and the ceaseless shuffle of offices, pri-

vate passions and obsessions were ceaselessly working themselves out. Word, inevitably, got out, and it was a silly bit of publicity that finally did for me. About three months ago, my publisher set up an interview with a glossy magazine and I saw no reason not to do it. The journalist dutifully asked me about the book. "It's about a House of Commons clerk who falls in love with a rent boy," I said, making the poor thing sound twice as scandalous as it really is. "So," he said, "you must have lots of gossip about the place."

things that encourage people to become a candidate is being unusually ugly." Kitchen Venom, in the meantime, was making its way. Some clerks came across it and disquiet was audibly mounting. I had a slightly bizarre letter from a very big cheese in the department warning me against giving a literary reading in the company of political journalists. In the end, the long-forgotten interview came to my rescue. The inevitable happened, and, on an especially slack day for news, a parliamentary diarist picked it up.

The game was up, I knew, and knew that the chaps at the top knew, that as soon as the book came out I was going to be sacked for it. The call came around three o'clock, just as we were returning from lunch. The secretary to the Clerk of the House has an unenviable job: the sound of her voice on the telephone is always the harbinger of some terrible racket. "I'll come over now," I said to her, putting the telephone down.

"Have you seen this?" he said, pushing the diary piece over to me. "Yes," I said. I told him how it came about. There was no point in arguing about it, so I said that I was offering an explanation but not an apology. He seemed relieved to hear the ancient formula. He skirted round the words "dismiss" and "sack" with considerable delicacy. Anyone would have thought he was worried about hurting my feelings, anyone might have thought he wasn't sacking me at all.

It's difficult to resent the time spent working in the House of Commons. In the end, I quite liked my job. But I was fed up with the pointless mania for anonymity, the obsessive guarding of the confidential relationship between the clerks and Members when, in truth, it's not something any Member gives two hoots about. It was a good five years; now there are better things to do. This is an extract from an article in the current *Spectator*.

# Ironing it out with mother

## Carol Thatcher inherited two traits from her mother — bossiness and the cold steel to lay the Maggie myth bare



The Joanna Coles Interview

CAROL Thatcher's mother has not read her book. "She hasn't evinced any interest," says Carol briskly. Doesn't she find this odd? After all, the book is a biography of Margaret's husband, Denis, as seen by her only daughter — isn't she curious?

"Oh we're not cross for interfering in each other's business," says Carol. But, surely, a biography of one's husband? "I'd be delighted for her to read it, Joanna, but she's in America at the moment. I'd be delighted for her to read it and tell me what she thinks."

As Carol beads over to pour us a cup of tea, it is impossible not to recognise the familiar matronly stoop. Didn't her mother even ask for a proof copy? "No. Isn't Carol hurt by this? No. Why not? It never occurred to me that she might... Do you find that extraordinary?" Yes.

"Oh dear," she mumbles, "I can see you think we're really dysfunctional." "Look, I didn't actually interview her for the book. I asked her a couple of things which Denis couldn't remember, such as where he'd proposed to her. But she couldn't remember either."

"I'd like her to read it," she continues in her array-like tone. "You know, when she comes back. I hope she will. She didn't come to the launch party either, because she's not here."

mother. The only detail Carol recalls about the night her mother was elected an MP on October 8, 1969, is that "neither of our parents was at home to tuck us into bed". Though Carol — for whom the phrase "sensible shoes" might have been invented — bravely insists she wasn't peeked, one cannot read her book without concluding otherwise. This is a girl who has spent her entire life feeling in the way. "She [Margaret] was prone to calling me by her secretaries' names and working through each of them until she got to Carol."

Even momentous events in her life took second place to those of her mother, such as when her Law Society exams coincided with the 1976 Tory leadership election.

What's the matter, darling, my mother asked as I peered at a mug of coffee and looked exasperated. "Mother was prone to call me by her secretaries' names and work through each of them until she got to Carol."

Today's exam, mum... "Well, you can't be as nervous as me," she chided. "My overriding memory is of names whispering 'Sib, mummy's working,'" says Carol grimly, picking at an enormous marbled ring, the size of a small clenched fist.

Having witnessed this slog at close hand, clearly Carol had no intention of following suit. After university she fled to Australia. Brother Mark also cleared off, to South Africa. Once in Sydney, she took up reporting, earning back only after "my friends in Oz said I'd be a silly arsehole to miss my mother being the first female prime minister."

She worked on and off for the Daily Telegraph. "My mother said to me, 'Listen, if you tell your contacts what goes on at Chequers then you sure as hell won't be invited back again.' On the surface, this is a

reasonable request. It is the vengefulness with which Carol tells it that makes one start.

Three years ago she shifted camp to Klosters, where she made the decision to write about her dad because "I felt my mother had left out the human dimension from her own volumes". I am just about to embark on another question, when Carol suddenly interrupts in a voice alarmingly similar to you-know-who's. "Do you think we should see if your tape recorder has been taped anything?"

I reassure her. "Are you sure? As long as you know, I have had dire disasters with these things!" I reassure her again. "That's fine then. So long as you're totally assured, Joanna," she says in a bossy whisper that implies I should do exactly as she suggests. "Start on your question again."

Why does she think her parents' marriage has lasted so long? "My mother was a clergyman at the time and I was written to an equation, she met someone who totally balanced the other side of it." But according to the book, the marriage comes across as that of two intensely selfish people, utterly absorbed by their own lives. They rarely spent time together and Denis was absent for most of Maggie's early triumphs.

When on his numerous trips abroad, he never bothered to contact the family. Even at the end, when his wife sat at home moaning after her fall, he was more interested in his own social life than offering support. "Margaret's diary was at first virtually blank," Carol writes. "Now it was Denis who died at the time and I would prepare to go out while Margaret enquired, 'What time will you be home dear?' and faced an evening alone eating a poached egg on toast. My father's friends stayed with him, rain, hail or shine; Margaret's stopped with politics."

Is this the sort of relationship Carol would like? "Um, no. If I had a relationship like that I would think there was something missing." There's no sense of physical contact in the book; do they still sleep together? Long pause. "Um, yes. They share a bedroom if that's what you mean."

Carol shares her own bedroom with Marco, a Swiss ski instructor who, aged 27, is precisely 15 years her junior. Their three-year relationship seems strange, not least



Chip off the old girder: "The Russians called my mother the Iron Lady. I rather like the idea of being the Iron Lady Junior"

PHOTOGRAPH STEVE PYKE

because Marco only learned to speak decent English last year and Carol speaks no other language. They rent a flat in Klosters. But what does she actually do there? "I ski a lot. I cross-country ski, I walk a lot. I mountain bike. I'm reasonably fit in as much as one drinks too much."

It is not the high achieving life one feels her mother might have expected. "I don't feel the need to live up to other people's expectations, Joanna. It's more satisfying living up to one's own expectations."

When you get to 40 you may as well do what you want and make your own views come true, particularly if you're single, because sure as hell no one else is going to do it for you.

Her conversation is oddly punctuated by these sudden outbursts which dissipate as fast as they flare up. I wonder, does she want

children? "No! One's too old at 42, and I was never in love enough with family life to have them. Moving to Klosters was a big step for me. Forty was a landmark for me, it's so easy to get into rutville."

Is that why she's going out with someone younger, to recapture her youth? "Cricket no."

So what are the advantages of a much younger boyfriend? "Er, I don't know. We don't sit there saying 'There's a 15-year age gap.' Does she notice the age gap? 'If he goes out on an all-boys night and they all speak German then I don't go. Time and space to do your own thing.'"

But Carol is still wrestling with doing her own thing. Indeed, it seems that she has yet to emerge from under the shadow of Downing Street. "I don't want to start every sentence with 'When my mother was PM...'," she says. So why write a book about daddy? It's

her way, she explains, of completing the Number Ten experience.

Then she announces that she has just signed up for a charity cycle race across Russia: "It's 20 years since the Russians called my mother the Iron Lady and I rather like the idea of Iron Lady Junior pedalling across the forces."

What will she do after that? "I've got a few ideas for another book. One hasn't had philosophical talks, Carol with Carol, you know."

So does she envy her mother? "No, I'm the first one to say congratulations. If she ever stops her lecture tours I would be to spend the time with her that I haven't in the past, because there is a lot I'd like to talk to about."

### As the Italians prepare to go to the polls, JOHN HOOPER looks at a country shackled to its bureaucratic past

# The country's pasta saving

THE bill for collecting our refuse arrived the other day from Rome council. What makes this annual event unwelcome is not the amount we have to spend, but the time. One hundred and fifty quid is reasonable, but the half an hour it takes to pay is not.

There is, however, no alternative. The bill can only be settled at city hall or a post office. We live in the capital of the world's fifth economy yet cannot arrange for our rates to be collected by direct debit. To get hold of the cash, my wife or I will go to an automatic cash dispenser — more in hope than expectation. Only some of the Italian banks' machines



recognises cards other than their own, and they are frequently out of operation, usually for reasons of *collegamento* ("want of connection"). A Spanish friend who landed in Rome without any money but cheerfully expected to be able to raise some at the airport, remained penniless. He had to hire a car with his credit card just to get to the city centre.

It is a good job the hire firm gave him a tank-full of petrol. A lot of service stations do not accept the usual, internationally-recognised cards and the vast majority close for lunch and on Sundays.

A lot of what is Italian that is projected to the outside world

is hyper-modern, or at least hyper-voguish — be it Ferrari cars, Versace ties, dried tomatoes or balsamic vinegar. Yet, as anyone who has visited the country of late will know all too well, Italy remains profoundly old-fashioned — hide-bound, not only by bureau-

cratic inefficiency, but also by practices intended to limit competition and protect this or that interest group. In Rome, you shop for food in a street market and for other products in a myriad of tiny shops which close down for at least two hours in the middle of the day. There is not a single department store as big as even, say, the Virgin Megastore in Oxford Street.

The capital is beginning to acquire the scruffy charm of Lisbon. And, almost without exception, Italy's seaside resorts have the look of places that have known better days. Those better days were in the fifties and sixties, and it may be no coincidence that a number of recent advertising campaigns — for Valentino and Martini, for example — have harked back to the lost pleasures of *la dolce vita*.

When Italians go to the polls tomorrow, the biggest issue facing them will be how to re-modernise their country. It is clear that an entire system which once served their well-

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Murder she wrote... the literary Suzanne Moore, whose new heroine has extraordinary sex with a policeman while fearing, vaguely, for her life

# Nightmare on Mean Street

A New York author has taken the city by storm with a graphic story of sex and murder. So what? So this time the author is a woman. **CLAIRE MESSUD reports**

IT TAKES a lot to shock Bret Easton Ellis, the writer of *American Psycho*. But Suzanne Moore, the 50-year-old author of three nostalgic recollections of childhood life in Hawaii, has managed it with room to spare. Her fourth novel, *The Cut*, a tale of brutal murder and rampant sex, even managed to discomfit the New York detectives who for two years helped her research the book.

"Bret [Easton Ellis] told me it was the most shocking thing he had read," Moore told the New Yorker last autumn, when the book was launched in the United States. Tomny Hyland, the detective to whom the book is dedicated, "was upset by it," she said. "But he also said it's what happens. He said it's worse than that."

The New Yorker interview was the beginning of a media landslide. Moore's face and statuette figure subsequently graced the pages of *Vanity Fair* and *Harper's Bazaar*. New York magazine, which rarely publishes fiction, excerpted a chapter of the novel, and it was reviewed in organs as diverse as *People*, *Time*, and the *New York Review of Books*.

Billed as an "erotic thriller", the book tells the story of 24-year-old Manhattanite Franine Thornton, a teacher of creative writing and linguist who is content to read the pages of slang in *Playboy* and *Play*. In the wake of a neighbourhood murder (involving, most horribly, dismemberment — or rather, "disarticulation"), Franine realises that she was one of the last to see the young victim alive. She also believes that she saw the woman felling the inspector who comes calling. Detective James Malloy.

Curiously, Franine's impulse is not to flee but to seduce the policeman on her doorstep, and the novel is as much an

account of their steamy physical relationship as it is a murder mystery. Malloy is not the only creepy guy Franine has to worry about: one of her students follows her around at all hours of the night and day, and she has a male friend who seems to be spying on her while walking his dog.

But Franine doesn't fret: "sinister", "sexy" and "men" all seem to be synonymous to her. The investigation proceeds, the murders continue — Franine loses her one close friend, Pauline — and Franine and Malloy have extraordinary sex while she fears, vaguely, for her life.

That it is a book about violence against women, with an unsavoury dismemberment, written by a woman, is reason enough for the media blitz. But the apparent incongruity of author and subject matter was also a subject of discussion. Moore is no trendy 20-something, cynically riding the shock-wave of *American Psycho*, *Dirty Weekend* and their ilk. She is a serious literary novelist, whose acclaimed earlier works explore the emotional development of sheltered young women attempting to find their way in the wider world.

Raised in Hawaii, Moore herself came to New York at 17, and after a brief stint modelling, moved to Los Angeles, where she read scripts for Warren Beatty and Jack Nicholson and had a small part in the 1967 film *The Ambushers*. She was married in 1972 to the production designer Richard Sylbert, and had a daughter, Lulu, in 1975. It was only after separating from her husband that she began to write, and her first novel, *My Old Sweetheart*, published in 1982, was nominated for the National Book Award. Her two subsequent novels, *The Whiteness of Bones* and *Sweet Dreams*,

are similar in focus to her first — evocative accounts of growing up in Hawaii interspersed with acute depictions of the American jet-set.

In writing about these worlds, Moore was staying close to home: the bohemian aristocracy is her natural milieu. Her friends include the writers Joan Didion and John Gregory Dunne, the aforementioned Bret Easton Ellis, and the fashion designer Bill Blass. She is no stranger to New York's society columns, and she spends six months a year travelling the globe.

In *The Cut*, with its claustrophobic conjuring of Manhattan's seamy side, thus represented a dramatic departure for Moore. She described the genesis of the novel to the New Yorker: "When I was writing the last Hawaiian novel, I couldn't read literary fiction... I read thrillers, and I began to wonder if a woman could really do it rough and dirty, and not write that kind of tame, Sue Grafton stuff. And when I read *Vox* and *Damage* I thought, people think this is

sex, this is sexy and erotic?" She calls in *The Cut* "a love story", and insists that "I never intended to shock, and I didn't want the book to be prurient, lurid or sensational." As she sees it, Franine, my heroine, fights the imposed powerlessness of being female, and I just worship her for that. Franine's kind of strength may have its price. Yet isn't that the other price higher?"

Moore's belief in female powerlessness is evident throughout her oeuvre. Women in her earlier novels are molested, raped and beaten as they attempt to establish their independent identities, and they endure their suffering without apparent anger, tending to blame themselves. It is peculiar, though, that Moore should consider Franine their opposite, a fighting heroine; ultimately, in *The Cut* is a portrait of a woman with a death wish, a literary template of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Isolated, self-destructive Franine is determined to wrest a measure of sexual satisfaction from the

opposite gender before — inevitably — they kill her; that is the best, Moore seems to say, that she can hope for.

Regardless of its stylistic merits, a sex-and-death novel such as this is destined to appeal to a different and less literary audience than Moore's earlier books. She has insisted, though, that she was not commercially motivated: "You can only write what you can write. The idea of setting out to write a bestseller doesn't work for me."

That very literary integrity may have fooled her publishers' hopes for sales, at least in the United States. Knopf printed a massive first run of 100,000 copies of *The Cut*, but in spite of the immense media coverage, the book never made the national best-seller lists.

Why this is remains unclear. In *The Cut* is but one of a growing number of American books and films to celebrate masochistic decadence, many of them extremely popular. Moore shares her black vision with Bret Easton Ellis, Helen

Zahavi and Dennis Cooper, to name but a few. The film *Leaving Las Vegas* touches a similar chord. A M. Homes' new novel, *The End of Alice*, about a paedophile murderer's correspondence with a teenage girl, is now raising a furor in the States and is selling well. All these works share a jejune and tedious will to shock their ever-more-challenging goal is to flap an increasingly unpalatable public.

In some quarters, at least, a backlash is brewing. The New York Times reviewer Michiko Kakutani recently penned an irate diatribe against "designer nihilism", specifically condemning in *The Cut* along with *The End of Alice* and *Leaving Las Vegas*. Kakutani argued that while "the old nihilism of, say, William Burroughs or the Marquis de Sade was deeply adversarial, defiant of bourgeois society and all it stood for", the contemporary penchant for darkness is "sensationalism for sensation's sake. Their peek into the abyss isn't philosophically interesting; it's just an excuse for a self-congratulatory smirk." It is, she claims, "a phony yuppie fashion."

Perhaps part of the problem with *The Cut* is that it is not sensationalist enough. Dull by violence in film and television, in recent years acclimated to its presence even in *Playboy*, the public no longer responds with fascination or outrage to the mere fictional "disarticulation" of a few women. When Detective Tomny Hyland informed Suzanne Moore that "it's worse than that", he merely voiced a truth that we have all come to accept. We are appalled by life's brutality, and art that does no more than mirror it fails to touch us.

In *The Cut* is published in Britain on April 25, by Picador

**Reviews**

**OPERA**

**Faust**  
Welsh National Opera

WELSH National Opera is celebrating its 50th anniversary with productions of the operas that launched its first season in 1946. *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, in perfectly decent stagings by Elijah Moshinsky, have already come into the repertory, and now they have been joined by a new *Faust*, conducted by Charles Mackerras, directed by Christopher Alden and designed by Bruno Schwegel, which is much more than merely decent: it is a fascinatingly vivid show, full of telling insights and savage, provocative wit.

It is all founded upon a rock-solid account of Goethe's score. Mackerras's affection for it is revealed in the luxuriantly rich sonorities he draws from the WNO orchestra, his long-limbed phrasing and the ever sympathetic support he gives the singers. Played and sung as well as this, it's easy to appreciate why this opera was hugely popular in the second half of the 19th century, and for an English text WNO has gone back to the very first translation, made by Henry Fothergill Chorley for London performances in 1864, five years after the Paris premiere.

All the times and (though notwithstanding, it is clear and highly singable, and the occasional archaisms do provide the key to Alden's approach, which fixes the opera in the context of the times from which it derives — Goethe's Germany, Goethe's France and Victorian England.

Though the production be-

gins unprepossessingly — the stage carpeted like a newly turfed lawn, a single ladder ascending to the flies, a circle of heavy velvet-black drapes, and Faust and Mephistopheles got up as refugees from some local leather bar — it gains steadily in definition and intensity.

When the drapes eventually rise it's to reveal the chorus, all top-batted and crinolined, apparently watching a Victorian melodrama with its parade of increasingly cruel images, from which Alden suggests there can be no escape. Margarita murders her baby by pitching it into the fire that has consumed the body of her brother Valentine, and in the final moments of the opera she hangs herself, quite without hope, it seems, of redemption. But this savage pessimism is undercut by moments of black humour — Margarita's sutor Siebel (touchingly done by Jo Wicks) reveals the body he not just a bunch of flowers but drags on a whole tree; Margarita's guardian Martha (Susan Gorton) is recruited as Mephistopheles' PA, and she lovingly fondles his sword just before he kills Valentine. The balance is perfect.

In an opera that is far more about the destruction of Margarita than about Faust himself, it's appropriate that the cast should be dominated by female voices. The young Margarita, exquisitely beautiful in the famous Jewel Song, Paul Charles Clarke is a secure, passionate Faust. Alastair Miles a solid, implacable Mephistopheles. All of them are still alive and not celebrating their 80th birthday. Rather than simply deliver a traditional biopic or a couple of adulatory profiles, it used his own words but in a drama-

blues kind of woman in denial. Why not swap a guitar or two for a bit of brass? She has written some lovely miserabilist songs and has a superb voice. Within one syllable, she sweeps down the octave to a sublime grumbling grittiness. It's just a pity we had to wait for the encore for the two best songs: Both Tumbling Tumbleweed and In Your Garden are delicate, moving and largely guitar free. As sensual as hot butter, they send a quiver straight up the groin.

Having launched her career with a number one single, *Sleeping Satellite*, Archer has seen three years of her second album, *Bloom*. It received wonderful reviews but is yet to make an impression on the charts. She seems to regard "image" as an irrelevance, but it's not Archer really needs to sell herself. If that means ditching the head, the dress and the deadliness, well and good.

Simon Hattenstone

every 10 minutes — we get an interpolated revue-sketch which aims at a more worldly sophistication. Most of these are wildly unfunny.

To be fair Julian Slade, whose aim was to write "insidiously simple music", succeeded admirably. Many of the songs are instantly memorable. If only Slade's melodic gifts were tethered to a narrative that engaged the intellect or the emotions.

And what seemed hopelessly innocent in 1954 has now acquired the pith of a modernist. *Salad Days* is allowed by director Ned Sherrin to get away with a display that makes Kenneth Williams look like Arnold Schwarzenegger.

If we have to revise 1956, British musicals are the work of Harker and Norman's infinitely superior *Make Me An Offer*, which makes *Salad Days* look extremely green indeed.

Box-office: 0171-836 9987. This review appeared in issue editions of last night's paper.

Michael Billington

## The words on everyone's lips

The central character of *In The Cut*, Franine Thornton, is a creative writing teacher and linguist. In this edited version she reads the words she has started to keep a dictionary in preparation for a paper on New York street slang.

Virginia, n., vagina (as in "he penetrated her virginity with a hammer")  
Bellow, n., pl., bowels, intestines  
Big heat, n., wig  
Bitch, n., refrigerator  
Yams, n., pl., legs  
Gambler's loss, n., the cool way to sit in the driver's seat of a car, leaning to the window side  
Snapper, n., vagina  
Gives, n., someone who lives cash  
Brookie, n., vagina (from the Sicilian? brookie? cured meat?)  
to skeeve, v., to disgust, repel; also a skeeve, n., a disgusting person (from the Italian scitocoo?)



... Well, I don't know where to start. What to say. What to think.

Royal National Theatre on Tour

# Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

by Tom Stoppard

"Utterly, hilariously and liberatingly funny"

Sunday Times

BATH Theatre Royal 22-27 April 01225 448844  
NEWCASTLE Theatre Royal 30 April-4 May 0191 232 2061  
SHEFFIELD Lyceum Theatre 6-11 May 0114 276 9922  
BRADFORD Alhambra Theatre 13-18 May 01274 752000

**Prime-time plums**

**Television**

**Jonathan Romney**

DAVID LLOYD, presenter of *Fruity Stories* (C4), has a voice perfectly suited to bringing out all the cadences of the word "plum". He sounds exactly like Andy Kershaw working his way through a mouthful of gobstoppers. I didn't much relish the thought of a half-hour devoted entirely to plums — it sounded like the British equivalent of one of Nicholson Baker's 20,000-word New Yorker pieces on paper clips. But this was fascinating, as an exotically cantankerous piece of rambling Englishness as anything seen since Sir John Betjeman trudged gamely into the upper reaches of Metroland.

It was all over the place, ripely messy like the bag of rotting sludge that someone sent as samples to Britain's leading plum classifier, who "fingerprints" them from their stones. There was the man who — Oh, hubris! — intended to genetically improve the Sea Buckthorn. There was the jolly osteopath who came across a hawthorn bush, and instead of stopping to have a Proustian epiphany, as you or I would, stoutly advised us to make a berry jelly. There was

emphasis on liveness that most pop shows cultivate. It has all the pre-packed artificiality of an early sixties beach party movie: it's a sort of anti-word: nothing untoward can happen.

But how one loves to see young people having a good time. "I think it's time that you realised — nothing means nothing to me any more," caroled heavy rockers The Almighty with conviction. Unexpectedly chirpy were the Manic Street Preachers, who, said Dani Behr, have "gone on to achieve worldwide fame with three albums of bleak desperation".

Behr — I'll show you bleak desperation. It was in the harmonies of Kate and Anna McGarrigle, adding their inimitable tones, acerbic as aloe, to an otherwise dreary rendition of *Wild Mountain Thyme* on *The Transatlantic Sessions* (BBC2). And it was in Karen Matheson's Gaelic lament, so stark that they had to drop in an insert of a blasted mountain-top directly after to cheer things up a bit.

But on the whole, this programme is a disgustingly convivial idea for a TV show — stick a bunch of old folkies together in an Ayrshire hotel and let them be beatific and cold-bloodedly professional oneself. "No audience, just ourselves, and of course the music," said fiddler Aly Bain, demonstrating the smug exclusivity that reminds me why I still prefer my bleak desperation turned up with amplifiers and funny camera angles, thank you.

**Legal affairs**

**Radio**

**Anne Karpf**

ARE LAWYERS succeeding, cops, and tecs as the profession around which dramatists and satirists hang their current concerns? Hot on the heels of TV's *Kavanagh QC* and *This Life*, Radio 4 is fielding a new five-part series about a group of barristers, *Chambers*. But this is no searing drama or contemporary soap: it's a legal sitcom.

John Bird plays John Fuller, the unprincipled head of a set of chambers with a clerk who trades in stolen goods on the side. Episode one sees Carp setting out to recruit a radical feminist lawyer, Ruth Quirke (Lesley Sharp) who's been working at a Citizen's Advice Bureau, in the mistaken belief that she's the daughter of a leading judge. In order to woo her to his set Carp himself feigns radicalism, metamorphosing into the kind of mock leftie who disappeared along with platform shoes and Gary Glitter. In the event Quirke climbs on board, only for Carp to learn that her father is nothing but a common bobby.

Absurd perhaps, but then that's what sitcom essentially is: the sitcom plot is almost

JANCO 1350







Kalim Siddiqui

# A rallying cry for Muslims

**K**ALIM SIDDIQUI, who has died aged 62, was Britain's most publicised Islamic fundamentalist. His notoriety was largely the result of his public campaign in Britain in favour of Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie.

The man who believed that "secularism was destroying mankind" died on a day marked by blood-letting, confessional bigotry and the massacre of innocents. In Cairo, Muslim zealots shot dead 18 Greek tourists as part of a campaign against a secular regime; in Lebanon, the Israeli air force delivered the deadly wrath of the Old Testament ("an eye for an eye and a tooth for tooth") in the shape of bombs on a civilian sanctuary, which left more than a hundred people dead. Siddiqui would have condemned the one and supported the other.

He was born in Sultanpur in Andhra Pradesh and was one of 10 brothers and sisters. His father was a poor policeman when accepting bribes could lead to loss of employment. He went to a predominantly Hindu school where the headmaster was a nationalist and supporter of the Congress Party. Siddiqui later claimed that he was always fighting the Hindu boys, but left it unclear as to whether this was religious or a political conflict. Most of his fellow-students were staunch nationalists and one of them was shot dead by a soldier during an anti-British assembly. Siddiqui, as the son of a policeman, might well have attracted hostility.

In 1960, when he was 17, he left India and migrated to Karachi in Pakistan, a state which had been created specifically to provide Indian Muslims with a homeland. He spent three years selling vegetables and sleeping wherever he could find shelter. Later, with other refugees from India, he started a weekly journal, the *Leader*, but it flourished. He contracted malaria and became disillusioned with Pakistan, claiming "I was not happy with Partition".

It was material necessity rather than spiritual fervour which brought him to England in 1960. His friends had funded his trip, hoping he would get journalistic training and return to help them.

In London he educated himself and worked on a string of local papers, ending up as a sub-editor on the *Guardian* from 1964-72. Siddiqui was never a free-thinker or an atheist, but nor was there ever a hint of what lay ahead. In 1974 he set up the Muslim Institute in Coventry, a far-left group, black nationalist, and so on — but during the 1980s a new generation, alienated from mainstream politics of any kind, began to find a new identity in religion.

**S**IDIQUI appealed to their frustration, but even so he remained fairly isolated. It was the furor over Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* which brought him to the fore. He would later boast that it was he who had inspired the fatwa on Rushdie to pronounce the fatwa. He used the affair to build a broader base for himself. The Muslim parliament was an inspired publicity stunt designed to outflank his rivals, but the idea and the institution was stillborn. The majority of Britain's Muslim community remained aloof.

In a 1989 interview with Hugo Young in this newspaper he said: "I see myself as a Guardian man. I would like to see Britain develop broadly along the lines the *Guardian* has always advocated." On other occasions he spoke of the "moral decay" and the "cultural filth" of modern Britain. Early this year he embarrassed Tehran by insisting that the fatwa on Rushdie should still be carried out. Rushdie, he argued, had blasphemed against God and his Prophet. The Iranians dissociated themselves from Siddiqui along the lines of his infinite wisdom has withdrawn him from this world.

**Tariq Ali**  
Halah Afshar writes: Siddiqui had sent Muslim leaders photocopies of the offending chapter in *The Satanic Verses*. The only criteria was the loy-

alty of the groups to Libya and its leader.  
Siddiqui did not visit Tripoli and the general view at the time was that he was being funded by Saudi Arabia. He claimed his money came from "private subscriptions".  
In 1979, when Khomeini proclaimed the Islamic Republic, Siddiqui had managed to establish himself and his institute as serious supplicants for funds put aside by the new regime to spread its message.  
The Saudis, alarmed by Siddiqui's attraction to the new order in Teheran, cut him off immediately. He flew to Teheran and embraced the clerics.  
Teheran declared an ideological jihad against the Saudi monarchy and its satrapies in the Gulf. Once again, as so often in Islamic history, there were now two major centres competing for the loyalty of the orthodox. Suddenly fundamentalist groups in Britain and elsewhere found themselves being wooed by big money. Petro-dollars began to fan the flames of fundamentalism.  
The Saudi-Iranian rivalry was conducted in Britain through rival rallies. The Saudi princes, hardliners in their own land, but ultimately dependent on the United States, favoured a more scholarly and softer approach in Europe.  
The Islamic Revolution of 1979, by contrast, was fiercely anti-imperialist, denouncing the United States as the "Great Satan" and insisting that militant Islam was the only serious alternative to the West and communism.  
Siddiqui flourished, becoming in the process the unofficial voice of the Teheran regime. He found support among many of the young Muslims in Britain. During the 1980s and 1970s, Asian youth had been attracted to secular projects — Labour, far-left groups, black nationalism, and so on — but during the 1980s a new generation, alienated from mainstream politics of any kind, began to find a new identity in religion.

where the Prophet of Islam is said to have been lured by the devil to include verses in the Koran that condoned idolatry. Siddiqui's message was widely embraced by all except Ayatollah Khomeini, for whom it was a useful publicity stunt. Fresh from a wounding defeat in the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, with the country lagging under unemployment, disaffected war veterans, and an ignominious cease-fire agreement with Saddam Hussein, Khomeini grasped at this opportunity to represent himself once more as the defender of the faith.  
In Britain it was only in Bradford that Siddiqui's call was heeded. Once more the impact was due to local politics. The city was ruled by the

casting vote of the Thatcherite mayor who had sanctioned severe cut-backs in welfare and educational provisions which were of considerable importance to the less well off in the Muslim community. The fatwa provided a legitimate rallying point for a Muslim community which saw itself as under siege.  
Siddiqui sought to channel this discontent towards an Islamic parliament, headed by himself. He used Khomeini's notion that since Muslims believe that God is the only law maker, to whom they must all submit, they should endorse, rather than vote for, an Islamic parliament to run their affairs.  
So Siddiqui set up his 150-member parliament in Lon-

don in 1992. In the event this venture was less than successful. In practice the *umma* (the Islamic community) in Britain is much divided along ethnic, national, class and even religious lines, with each small group supporting its own particular school of Islamic thought.  
What was effective, however, was an aspiration to a national Islamic unity and grandeur extending well beyond Britain. The Rushdie affair and the Gulf war fuelled the ardour for Islam and its unifying strength among Muslims in the region. But British Muslims did not want to be part of a little England clique with its own agenda devoted to the aspiration of one man. Despite the connotation of tra-

ditionalism, the Islamic revival in the West at the end of the 20th century is a rewriting of Islam to suit the needs of young idealists: illiberalism and blind obedience to the elders does not form part of the agenda.  
As a result of misreading the mood and the intention of local mosques to revive interest in his cause.  
Once Khomeini died and the Rushdie episode calmed down, there was little left of the Siddiqui impact on the world stage. Thus it may be ungracious, but Siddiqui's impact has been greatest on the life of one individual, Salman Rushdie. Otherwise, politically, his attempt to set up an effective Islamic voice in England failed, not least because Muslims in England, though they may choose to identify themselves at times in terms of their religion, live different lives; in their political lives they prefer to be British citizens with democratic rights and entitlements.  
Kalim Siddiqui leaves a wife, two daughters and a son in Slough, Berkshire, where he had lived for many years.  
Kalim Siddiqui, Islamic campaigner, born July 2, 1933; died April 18, 1996

**Siddiqui's soundbites**  
I take a very broad view of life. I believe you are entitled to your values, and I'm entitled to mine. I must not abuse yours, and you must not abuse mine. — *Guardian*, November 24, 1989.  
If [*The Satanic Verses*] sets out to insult and abuse Islam and Muslims in a manner we are not prepared to be insulted and abused — *letter*, *Guardian*, December 1, 1989.  
The fact is that there is no campaign in this country to kill Rushdie — *letter*, *Guardian*, December 22, 1989.

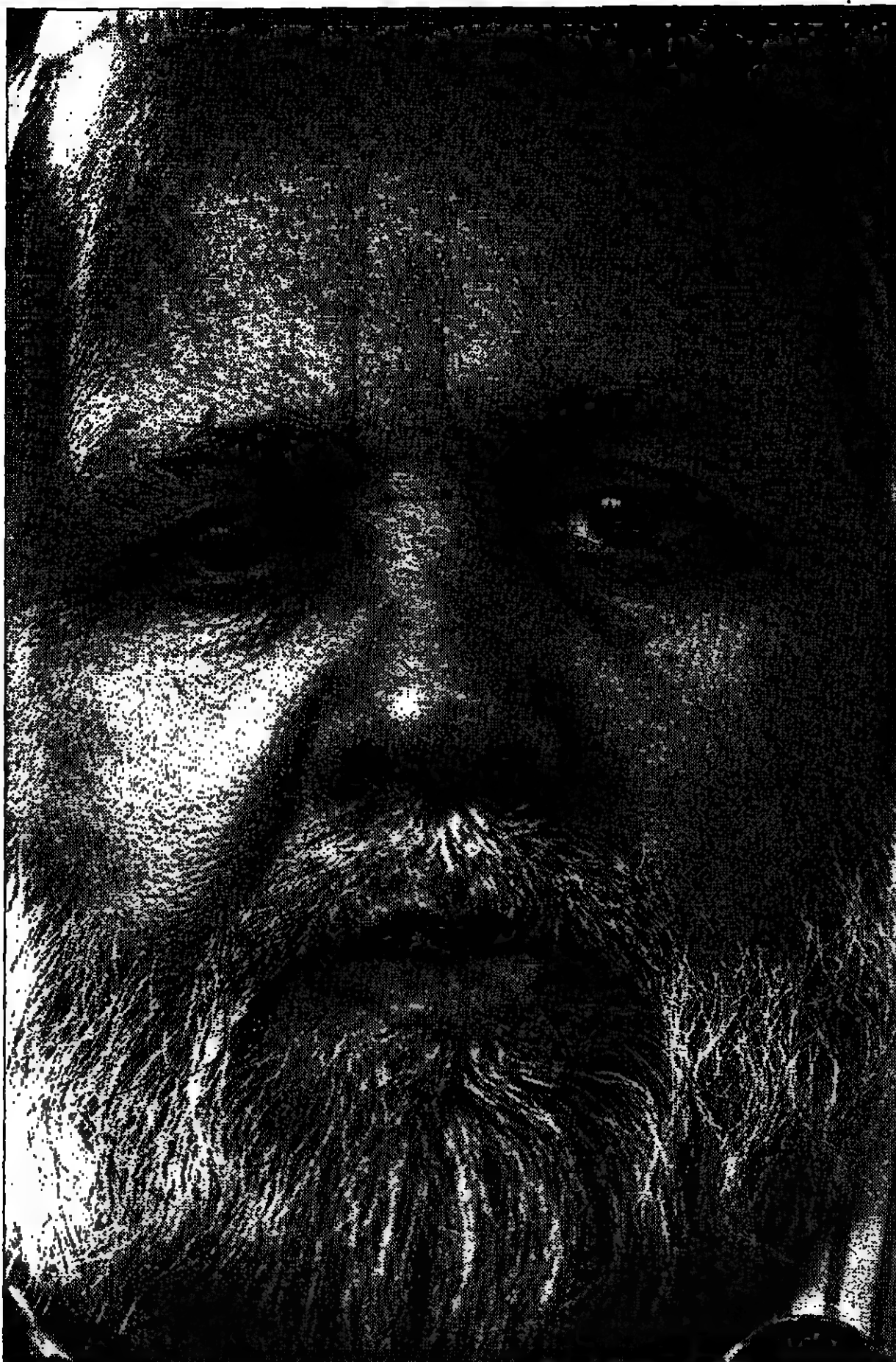
After this, physics and spirituality were for me no longer isolated twin peaks in my world; now artistic expression, bodily movement in dance, and the deep well-springs of emotion all claim their places in a new and vibrant universe.  
All this has become possible because both science and mysticism (or spirituality) have broadened enormously. Regrettably, this has opened up the undesirable common ground of pseudo-science and pseudo-mysticism: numerology, UFOs, perpetual motion, and so on. One of the conference organisers, the Scientific and Medical Network, is to find ways to sort the wheat from the chaff. I want to explain what I see as the authentic ground in points.  
Until recently the only recognised mystics were strange individuals who cut them-

self off from society to enter the incommunicable ecstasy of union with God. Then in the past 20 years writers such as the theologian and former Dominican Matthew Fox dared to apply the word "mystical" to events where the boundaries of our world are pushed out by a direct experience of something lying beyond, or hidden within, what we call reality. If it enlarges our life and our understanding, there can be something of the mystical in falling in love, in encountering a wilderness landscape, in discovering a new area of mathematics, as well as in using meditation to go deep inside yourself, or in the quiet loss of ego achieved through beautiful ritual.  
If it is direct experience and poetry that opens out new forms of reality, it is modern science, particularly modern physics, that connects the ex-

perience with our rational thinking, and with the practical needs and crises of the 21st century. This is where things get controversial: the vast majority of practising physicists would deny any link between their work and mystical experience. They would say the sort of reasoning used when studying the behaviour of atoms and particles is confined to that subject, and any attempt to extend the ideas to events where the boundaries of the human world is illegitimate. I am convinced, however, that the phenomena revealed in the physics of particles gives us both a new language for talking about — and insight into — the world which fits with those experiences I have called mystical.  
In these mystical experiences, we see the world as integrated, with an inner life that penetrates it; we feel ourselves extended out of our physical bodies into a union with a greater whole. Physics provides us with a language of interpenetrating fields, of integrated states that can combine opposite properties within a single whole which can make sense of our experi-

ence, without attempting to explain it away.  
Many people have "mystical" experiences, but dare not speak about them or use them to enrich their relationships. Science, interpreted as I have suggested, can now offer a picture of the world in which it is acceptable to talk about these experiences. If this were to happen on a wider scale the grip of materialism on society would be weakened; by acknowledging the way we are all connected, we would start to value people for what they love, not what they possessed.  
Science in the past has taught us that the world is a soulless machine. People have constructed a mechanised society for an alienated humanity while Christianity has by and large degenerated into offering personal salvation conditional on denying the world. At last it is becoming possible, without abandoning scientific rigour, to see the world as it is, as a vibrant and living organism. The clues that were presented through the image of Gaia — the earth as a self-regulating organism — can now be linked into an experience to which we can all open ourselves, and the original insights of religion to renew the world can return to take their proper place. Light is appearing at the end of the tunnel of spiralling material consumption in which humanity seemed trapped.

Chris Clarke is professor of applied mathematics at the University of Southampton. His book, *Reality Through the Looking Glass*, is published by Floris Books.



Kalim Siddiqui... his attempt to create an Islamic parliament failed. PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEASER

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## Appreciation: Gutiérrez Alea

# Philosophical art of film making

**TOMAS GUTIÉRREZ ALEA** (obituary, April 17) was not just a patriotic Cuban but identified himself as a Latin American. He felt deeply the offence taken throughout Latin America at the way it is represented by Hollywood. I once went with him to see *Under Fire*, the film about Nicaragua by Roger Spottiswoode. As we came out he was quietly fuming. He found its misrepresentation of the Sandinista struggle insulting.

On another occasion we went to see his film, *Death of a Bureaucrat*, which was being re-run in Havana. He had been told that audiences were responding to it as a new film, not one that was 20 years old, and wanted to see for himself. The film is a black comedy about a body which is illicitly exhumed by the family in order to recover the man's union card which had been buried with him, so that his widow could claim her pension. He told me that at the film's premiere in 1986 a woman had run out in the middle in tears. Following her to find out what had upset her, he discovered that the joke she thought he had invented had actually taken place.

This was in the mid-1980s, when Titón was taken by an idea I had for a film of *The Tempest* told from Caliban's point of view. Channel 4 and

ICAIC, the Cuban Film Institute, agreed to put up the development money and I went to Cuba to write the script with Titón and the Cuban playwright, Eugenio Hernández. We quickly agreed on the outline. Caliban and Ariel would both be black and they would argue about the best way to deal with Prospero. Ariel represented the reformist option, Caliban the revolutionary.  
We had just started casting when the project fell through. The balance of the budget was to come from the man who had put up half the money for Hugh Hudson's *Revolution*, and when it went over budget by \$4.5 million — three times the amount we needed — our backer withdrew. No one else could be persuaded to step in.  
Titón took it philosophically, as he did the misinterpretations of his work which regularly cropped up, such as when Andrew Sarris described him as a dissident for *Memoirs of Underdevelopment*, or when he was criticised for not being political when he chose to make a simple love story, *Letters from the Forc*. But few directors have been so consistent to their own vision, or so adept at reinventing themselves in every film.

Michael Chanan

## Letters: Donnelly and Burke

**Julian Humphreys writes:** Am I to judge from your recent obituaries — Maggie Donnelly (April 17) and James Burke (April 18) that a sure-fire way of achieving recognition in the late 20th century is to be a homeless alcoholic or a murderous thief?

**Walker Cairns writes:** The fact that James "Jimmy the Gent" Burke was known for "the kindly way he treated his victims" and the fact that the film *Goodfellas* was based on

his life cannot obscure the fact that he was former ally of murder and spent nearly 60 years relieving people of their belongings.  
Many people who never hurt a fly died on the same day as Burke. Their relatives, on reading the semi-documentary manner in which his misdeeds are detailed, could be forgiven for wondering whether their deceased relative would have merited more attention from the press if he/she also had engaged in crime.

## Weekend Birthdays

**THE** question for John Elliot Gardner, who is 53 today, is where next beyond authenticity? Having finished a cycle of Mozart's opera cycle, and closed up the 19th century with an orchestra using the almost modern instruments Berlioz and Wagner were thinking of, what should the Karajan of period performance do now?  
The Purcell tercentenary found Gardner strangely reserved. Authentic casting of voices to match Mozart's original choices, and a bold takeover of the director's role in charge of productions, did not cause revelations like the old days. Cleaned-up old masters lose their original glaze along with the dirt the issue of individual interpretation was just temporarily subverted by authenticity. Not that Gardner, a lively and authoritative master, lacks individuality. But an orchestra chosen by you, and so beholden to you, does not provide the musical quality every maestro wants to pit himself against. Go for it, Jigg. Next time round, when re-recording everything, do it with the best orchestras and opera companies — without an army of authenticity enthusiasts to explain. Treat yourself to equal treatment. TS

**Today's other birthdays:** Alan Beth, Liberal Democrat MP, 53; Gao Harlan, Brundisland, prime minister of Norway, 47; Sebastian Faulks, author, 43; Louise Jameson, actress, 46; Jessica Lange, actress, 47; Nicholas Lyndhurst, actor, 35; Ryan O'Neal, actor, 55; Rodger Parsons, solicitor, 53; Leslie Phillips, actor, 72; Peter Snow, broadcaster, 66; Jean Southworth QC, chairman, Police Discipline Appeals

**Tomorrow's birthdays:** Eler Majesty The Queen, 70; Prof Ian Brock, director, Royal National Institute for the Blind, 51; Cheryl Gillan, MP, Minister of Education and Employment, 44; Heather Joshi, economist, 50; John Mortimer QC, author, creator of Rumpole, 72; Anthony Quinn, actor, 81; Nina Temple, secretary, Democratic Left, 40.

**Death Notices**  
LOVELLY, Vivian Ailsa Grace Ailsa of the back passage, at St Barth's Hospital, London April 15th. Celebration of her life as an out of control day man at Queen's Friends Meeting House, Bath, 10am, Leybourne, 20th April followed by cremation at London Crematorium, Abercrombie Road, Manor Park, 7.45pm.  
DANIEL, Robert Anthony. Dated quarterly in *Forbes* on 16 April 1992. Cremated on 25 April at 1 o'clock at St Martin Crematorium.

**Birthdays**  
WARD, Angela Peggy 15th Birthday. Lots of love from, dad, Robert and Sharon, Ian and Mickey and Nan.

Write place your announcement telephone 0771 713 4667. Fax 0771 713 4188.

## Face to Faith

# Science and spirituality

Chris Clarke

**L**AST WEEKEND at Winchester an overflow hall with a video link was required for the National Conference of Mystics and Scientists. There was a constant atmosphere of excitement as new relations between science and the mystical, two seemingly opposite worlds, were explored.

My own journey is typical of many. I started from a career as a mathematical physicist, studying the conditions of extreme temperature and pressure in the universe, on the boundary of space-time. This has been combined with a love of the Christian contemplative tradition. A personal growth weekend based on the work of the wise early psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich revealed new dimensions:

after this, physics and spirituality were for me no longer isolated twin peaks in my world; now artistic expression, bodily movement in dance, and the deep well-springs of emotion all claim their places in a new and vibrant universe.  
All this has become possible because both science and mysticism (or spirituality) have broadened enormously. Regrettably, this has opened up the undesirable common ground of pseudo-science and pseudo-mysticism: numerology, UFOs, perpetual motion, and so on. One of the conference organisers, the Scientific and Medical Network, is to find ways to sort the wheat from the chaff. I want to explain what I see as the authentic ground in points.  
Until recently the only recognised mystics were strange individuals who cut them-

self off from society to enter the incommunicable ecstasy of union with God. Then in the past 20 years writers such as the theologian and former Dominican Matthew Fox dared to apply the word "mystical" to events where the boundaries of our world are pushed out by a direct experience of something lying beyond, or hidden within, what we call reality. If it enlarges our life and our understanding, there can be something of the mystical in falling in love, in encountering a wilderness landscape, in discovering a new area of mathematics, as well as in using meditation to go deep inside yourself, or in the quiet loss of ego achieved through beautiful ritual.  
If it is direct experience and poetry that opens out new forms of reality, it is modern science, particularly modern physics, that connects the ex-

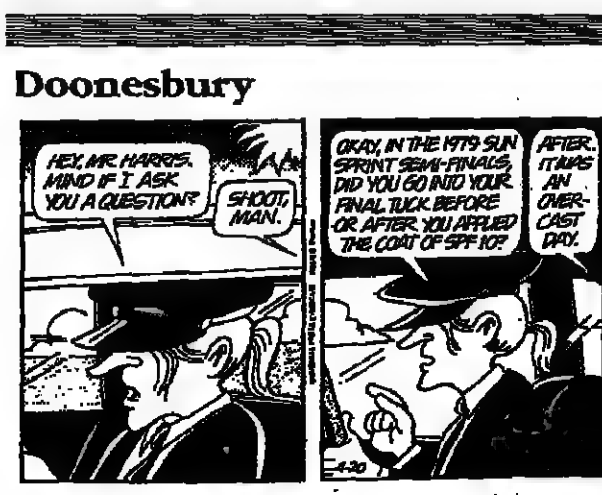
perience with our rational thinking, and with the practical needs and crises of the 21st century. This is where things get controversial: the vast majority of practising physicists would deny any link between their work and mystical experience. They would say the sort of reasoning used when studying the behaviour of atoms and particles is confined to that subject, and any attempt to extend the ideas to events where the boundaries of the human world is illegitimate. I am convinced, however, that the phenomena revealed in the physics of particles gives us both a new language for talking about — and insight into — the world which fits with those experiences I have called mystical.  
In these mystical experiences, we see the world as integrated, with an inner life that penetrates it; we feel ourselves extended out of our physical bodies into a union with a greater whole. Physics provides us with a language of interpenetrating fields, of integrated states that can combine opposite properties within a single whole which can make sense of our experi-

ence, without attempting to explain it away.  
Many people have "mystical" experiences, but dare not speak about them or use them to enrich their relationships. Science, interpreted as I have suggested, can now offer a picture of the world in which it is acceptable to talk about these experiences. If this were to happen on a wider scale the grip of materialism on society would be weakened; by acknowledging the way we are all connected, we would start to value people for what they love, not what they possessed.  
Science in the past has taught us that the world is a soulless machine. People have constructed a mechanised society for an alienated humanity while Christianity has by and large degenerated into offering personal salvation conditional on denying the world. At last it is becoming possible, without abandoning scientific rigour, to see the world as it is, as a vibrant and living organism. The clues that were presented through the image of Gaia — the earth as a self-regulating organism — can now be linked into an experience to which we can all open ourselves, and the original insights of religion to renew the world can return to take their proper place. Light is appearing at the end of the tunnel of spiralling material consumption in which humanity seemed trapped.

Chris Clarke is professor of applied mathematics at the University of Southampton. His book, *Reality Through the Looking Glass*, is published by Floris Books.

## Doonesbury

**BY GARRY TRUDEAU**



## Face to Faith

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# Savers pay price as Woolwich cuts interest rates

THE Woolwich Building Society has cut interest rates on three of its range of investment accounts. New gross rates on its Current and Prime Gold accounts are down by 0.25 of a percentage point. Typical balances of between £500 and £4,999 on deposit in either account will now earn 2.1 per cent before tax (1.85 per cent net). Its Tessa savers now earn 0.85 of a percentage point less on deposits up to £5,999 at 5.25 per cent.

National & Provincial has also cut its investment rates by 0.25 of a percentage point. New lower rates in its Investment Reserve account now start from 4.4 per cent gross (3.95 per cent net) on a minimum deposit of £5,000, and its Private Reserve Account now returns 3.1 per cent gross (2.48 per cent net) on balances of at least £500.

ABBEY National is offering savers with at least £5,000 a three-year fixed-rate investment bond which pays yearly interest at 6 per cent gross; 4.8 per cent after tax in the first year rising to 5.5 per cent before tax (5.3 per cent net) in the third.

FOR savers with at least £10,000 the Norwich and Peterborough Building Society offers a choice of locking up their funds for two, three or five years. The one-year bond pays 6.75 per cent gross (5.4 per cent net), the three-year

## Cashpoints

pays 7.25 per cent gross (6.75 per cent net) and the five-year returns 7.6 per cent gross (6.08 per cent net).

The Newcastle Building Society has a two-year fixed-rate bond paying 6.75 per cent gross (5.4 per cent net) on a minimum deposit of £2,000. And the Yorkshire Building Society is offering savers with £2,500 guaranteed interest of 7.2 per cent before tax (5.78 per cent net) for three years.

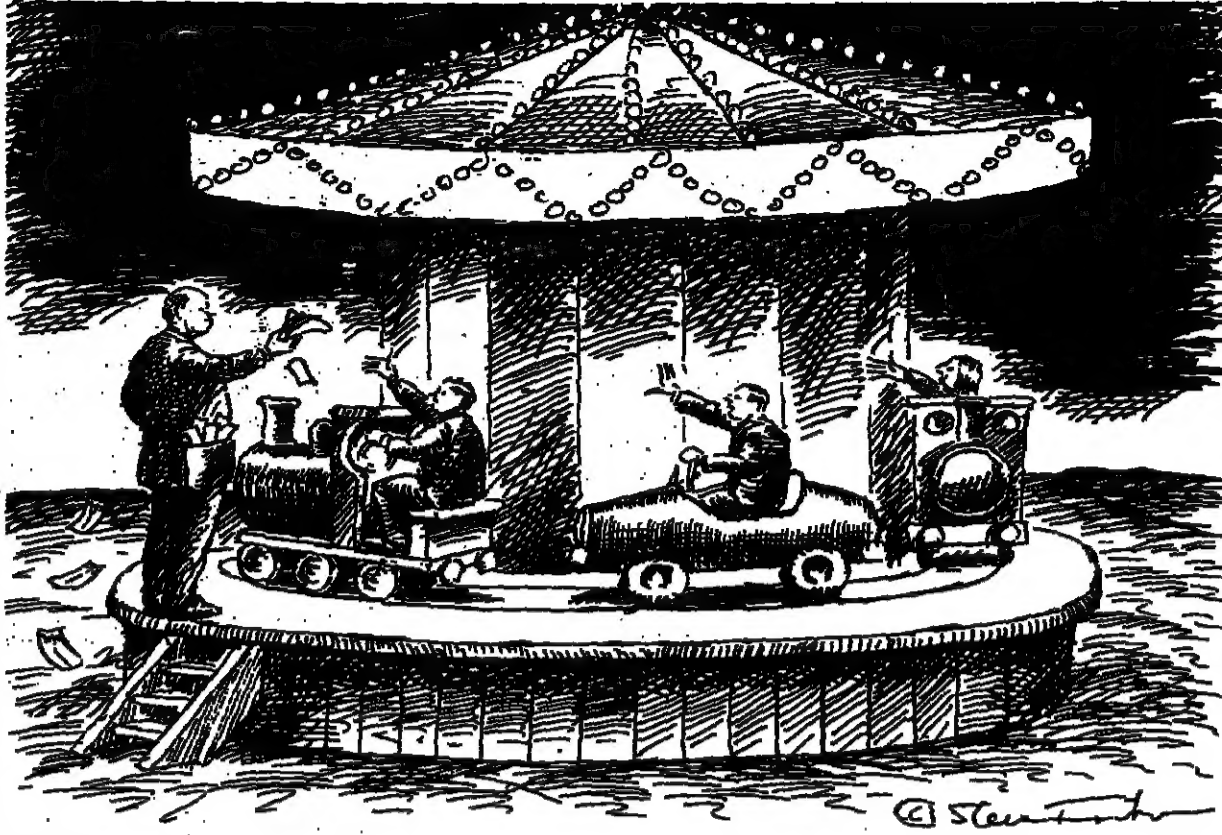
ALLIANCE & Leicester has launched a new package of fixed-rate mortgages, starting from a one-year deal fixed at 1.65 per cent. Its two-year fixed-rate home loan is priced at 4.8 per cent, the three-year deal at 6.49 per cent and a five-year fixed-rate mortgage at 7.99 per cent.

But these eye-catching rates come with a price. Borrowers who switch lenders before April 1, 2001 will have to give back cash equivalent to six months' interest.

THE Cheltenham & Gloucester is offering fixed-rate mortgages without early redemption penalties but the rates are higher. Its two-year fixed-rate deal is priced at 6.69 per cent and 8.89 per cent for a five-year fix.

As investors are advised to take rail profits early, Labour denies it hates company cars. IAN WYLIE reports

# Take the money and drive



## So will the perks be parked?

ABOUT tried to distance itself this week from suggestions that it plans to get tough on company car drivers. But a tightening of the tax rules on company cars would not only ease urban congestion but could raise a handy £2 billion.

The Metropolitan Transport Research Unit (MTRU) says the Treasury could net £1.5 billion if parking spaces provided by companies are taxed as a benefit to the employee. The MTRU says 43 per cent of parking in urban areas is free to drivers of company cars.

Maurice Parry-Wingfield, tax adviser at accountants Deloitte & Touche, says implementing a tax on parking spaces would be difficult. Private non-residential parking used to be taxed, but the Inland Revenue dropped the tax in 1988 because of difficulties in

calculating the value of the benefit. "Perhaps the Inland Revenue took a look outside at the rows of company cars parked on their own forecourt," suggests Mr Parry-Wingfield.

But the MTRU says a flat duty of £500 a year could be levied on employers for every private non-residential parking space, and money raised could be returned in the form of income tax cuts, lower business rates or investment in public transport.

Further research conducted by the Institute for European Environmental Policy suggests another £500 million could be raised by preventing company car drivers from exploiting the tax discounts awarded to high-mileage drivers. Tax bills are cut by a third of the driver chalks up more than 2,500 business miles a year and by two-thirds if they

claim to have exceeded 18,000 business miles. While this is intended to mitigate the tax burden on drivers who genuinely use their cars on company business, it actually encourages drivers to chalk up more business miles.

The Department of Transport estimates that almost half of company car drivers complete less than 2,500 business miles each year, yet only 10 per cent of these drivers admit it to the taxman. Transport 2000, the environmental pressure group, believes one solution would be to tax all cars at

the full rate unless drivers can prove otherwise. Ultimately, however, Transport 2000 director Stephen Joseph says the company car culture must be tackled. In Nottingham, for example, the group is working with the city council to encourage employers to offer other perks such as childcare.

Tax advisers Grant Thornton suggest another alternative to company cars: company bikes. In Holland, owning a bicycle bought by the company is tax-free, as long as the bike costs no more than £400.

## Go for the shares but cash in quick

NEXT month's Railtrack sale may still be on track following this week's Commons vote but the 1 million would-be investors who have registered an interest in the shares are being advised to take their profits early.

The Government published the Railtrack Pathfinder prospectus this week and private investors have just a week and a half to register with a share shop to ensure they receive preferential allocations of shares, plus any incentives on offer.

Most of the shops say interest in Railtrack is on a par with last year's sale of the power generating companies. And while Railtrack cannot offer investors the same soaring gains as earlier privatisation issues, Government subsidies to the transport companies, and the access charges which Railtrack can levy, have been fixed to make sure the sale will be profitable for the next few years.

If Labour wins the next general election they might find that re-nationalising Railtrack would be too costly. But while the shares are expected to yield up to 8 per cent, Labour has warned that its tougher regulation would mean lower returns for shareholders.

However, it is the short-term incentives that are attracting private investors. The £89 million of last year's profits being used as a sweetener will be paid as a dividend in October and investors will receive another dividend payment in February 1997. Most private investors will apply for shares in the UK public offer.

The first instalment will cost 150p but the cost of the second instalment, due in

June 1997, will not be known until the shares are priced on March 20.

If the price plummets, investors can sell their partly-paid shares on the market, but there will be a 15p per share discount on the first 500 shares to investors who pay the second instalment.

Investors who hold on to their shares until the end of May 1998 will, in addition, receive a bonus share for every 15 held.

Under the UK public offer, which closes on May 15, the minimum subscription will be 200 shares, which will mean a first instalment of £300. Private investors can apply for more shares under the international retail tender offer which closes on May 17. The minimum will be £3,000 and the overall price slightly higher than under the UK offer. But investors putting their shares into a PEP will receive a preferential allocation in the international offer.

Although application deadlines are set in the middle of next month, share shops are expected to close their books by the end of April.

Minimum fees are around 57p but, judging by from the latest rash of investor incentives, it would appear that share shops are competing on the basis of prize draws rather than dealing charges.

ShareLink, for example, is staging a draw with the first prize of a ShareLink MarketMaster account worth £5,000. City Deal is offering a two-night stay in Paris, travelling by Eurostar on the outward journey and returning by the Orient Express.

ProShare has published a free booklet using a share shop. For a copy send a large self-addressed envelope and a 35p or 50p stamp to Share Shop Booklet, ProShare, PO Box 640, London EC3V 9HX.

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Hotels float for growth

THE strength of Britain's hotel industry was underlined yesterday when Millennium & Copthorne announced that it would be valued at £402.1 million — way ahead of City expectations — at its flotation next week.



Open sesame... David Cook, Millennium & Copthorne's finance director, and the doorman of Bailey's Hotel, South Kensington. PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID MANSFIELD

Saturday Notebook

Market that needs to be on its mettle



Patrick Donovan

WHISPERS are circulating about the London metal markets. Some should be dismissed as scurrilous tales of mischievous intent. Others are simply fantastic. Either way, the rumours persist.

That the market rigorously polices its own rules and that any transgressor is ruthlessly brought to book. But this is the problem. The LME puts far too much stress on keeping its own house in order.

Hanson wins £1.7bn deal

National Power sells 3 stations

HANSON last night clinched a £1.7 billion deal to buy three huge power stations from National Power in a move which will manoeuvre the conglomerate into the super-utility league.

Jan Lang, the Trade and Industry Secretary, who is agonising over a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report into whether to allow National Power and PowerGen to buy Southern, Electric and Midlands Electricity respectively.

US predator may break monopoly

Gregory Palast FOR SOUTHERN Company of Atlanta, one of America's most controversial utilities, to buy National Power would turn over the biggest player in the UK power market to a foreign owner.

Comment Gregory Palast

THE Government contends that National Power and PowerGen control only 40 per cent of the market but, between 4pm and 6pm every weekday afternoon, the National Grid would collapse without power from these two.

News in brief

Police report on pools firm A report of a police investigation into criminal allegations involving a sacked senior employee in the stores division of retail and pools group Littlewoods has been sent to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Biggest shareholder backs BET in Rentokil fight

BET, the business services group fighting off a hostile £2.1 billion bid from rival Rentokil, yesterday received a huge boost when M & G, its biggest shareholder, said it would be rejecting the Rentokil bid.

Armstrong forced on defensive

Geoffrey Gibbs LORD Armstrong, the former Cabinet Secretary, was forced to bring all his old political skill to bear yesterday as disgruntled investors tackled directors of the Bristol and West Building Society about the proposed £600 million takeover by the Bank of Ireland.

Fergus Lyons, an investor who has previously sought election to Bristol and West's board, said the Bank of Ireland had got the society for a knock-down price but the bank was "a very good lifeboat to look for".

coming under the control of a foreign bank, but Lord Armstrong sought to deny fear on the issue of regulation.

US urges faster growth on Europe

Ministers pressed over budget deficits, reports SARAH RYLE in Washington

THE Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, and his European counterparts will come under pressure from the United States government to boost economic growth and get budget deficits under control when the Group of Seven meet in Washington tomorrow.

as output, and better than its most important European partners Germany and France on employment, but Mr Clarke will not escape the American disquiet about the overall European underperformance highlighted by the IMF earlier this week.

our fiscal problems. Now we have the lowest budget deficit to GDP ratio in the G7 at 2 per cent this fiscal year and it will be lower still next year. We have addressed the issue that the rest of the world told us to. Now we are in a very strong position to ask other countries to address problems that we see."

rowing requirement overshoot demonstrated. "European growth is very slow and clearly it is in the interests of Europe and the rest of the world for it to strengthen," said Mr Rubin. He welcomed the Bundesbank's decision to cut both leading base rates by 0.5 per cent.

HSBC's non-famous five received total of £4.62m

THE highest-paid five employees at HSBC bank last year received combined salaries worth £4.62 million, with one unnamed employee earning more than £1.4 million.

was Hong Kong-based John Gray who saw his salary soar from £980,000 to the £1 million mark thanks to a huge "variable benefit package" which included £537,000 worth of housing and other benefits in kind.

Table with columns for TOURIST RATES - BANK SELLS, listing rates for various countries like Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and USA.

Handwritten Arabic text: "سكا من الامم"



# Kvaerner sets a bold course for Trafalgar

KEITH HARPER and JOANNA WALTERS observe the Norwegians arriving in London

**K**VARNER, the Norwegian giant which this week paid \$204 million for Trafalgar House, intends turning London into the engineering and contracting capital of the world.

This audacious attitude comes from Kvaerner's former president and now Trafalgar House's chairman, Erik Tonseth. In the eight years he was in charge of Kvaerner, Mr Tonseth managed to make it one of the world's few profitable shipbuilding companies. Trafalgar House, however, is his biggest challenge. It requires vision to launch yourself as a fully-fledged multinational by taking on an ailing British company with debts of almost £2 billion and losses last year of £20 million.

One of the most precious stones in the Trafalgar House crown is Cunard, another lacklustre part of the old dynasty, but with a name brand still capable of stirring the imagination. With losses of £16 million, Trafalgar House's passenger shipping division needs an overhaul.

Mr Tonseth arrived in London only this week to seal the deal, yet the Trafalgar House board has already been purged of all but three of its directors. Those remaining are likely to be employed in assessing potential bidders for the commercial property and Cunard passenger shipping arms.

John Fletcher, executive director responsible for business development and marketing, Peter Ward, chief executive of Cunard, and Alan Winter, executive director responsible for commercial property, survived the clear-out.

The slim new board consisting of Mr Tonseth, Jan Magnus Hegge, finance director, Jan Greve, legal director, Fletcher, Mr Ward and Mr Winter met on Thursday. The property arm is up for sale and attracting some attention. Mr Ward last week made an impassioned plea for troubled Cunard to be given time to rebuild its track record rather than be subject to a fire sale.

Mr Tonseth and Mr Hegge will now have to reside almost permanently in London and new offices are being sought. Senior executives from both companies under-

# JOHN GLOVER profiles the money manager challenging the financial establishment Ebner sends the Swiss cuckoo

**M**ARTIN EBNER, though Swiss, a money manager and indisputably rich, is not your normal gnome. A distinctive figure, with lank hair and trademark bow-tie, he has fought a lonely battle for the past four years against the management of Union Bank of Switzerland, one of the bastions of the Swiss financial establishment.

Mr Ebner won his position as UBS's resident pest by taking a large stake in the bank's high-voting registered shares through EK Vision, an investment fund he set up in 1992. At one point, he theoretically controlled almost 20 per cent of the votes.

The registered shares have a nominal value of \$121 (€11) and have complex ownership restrictions attached. The far more liquid bearer shares

have a nominal value of \$100. In effect, registered shares have five times as many votes as do the bearers. However, UBS also has an article in its statutes limiting any single shareholder or group of shareholders to 5 per cent of the votes. This prevents a takeover on the cheap and making it hard to dislodge management.

Their attempt — narrowly agreed to by shareholders in November 1994 — to unify the bank's share structure by transforming all the shares into bearers, is behind part of the bitterness between the two sides. The move would have hit Mr Ebner by reducing his clout and the value of his investment. Mr Ebner challenged the decision of the November meeting in court. The case is still pending.

It then emerged that UBS had bought some of its own

shares using forward contracts bringing the date of the November meeting. The shares were voted with the board by the previous owner, who was risking nothing, and may have been decisive in the outcome. They also fell in price after the meeting, prompting Mr Ebner to ask magistrates to open a criminal investigation into whether the board had wilfully damaged the bank.

Mr Ebner's battle centres on his call for management to prioritise shareholders' interests. It has not made him Mr Popularity, but Mr Ebner is not interested. He is no more loved by the average Swiss than the banking establishment. This is not surprising, since the strategy he hopes to



Come back Clive Sinclair... At the 24th International Inventors Fair in Geneva, Belgium, Lac Depren rides his electric motor-powered mobile suitcase. PHOTOGRAPH: DONALD STAMPAU

# German media titans face trial by black box

**F**REDERICK STUDEMANN in Berlin

AFTER decades of lagging behind, the German television industry is on the threshold of a revolution which is set to spawn Europe's most lucrative broadcasting market, consuming billions of marks and in the process, possibly, the scale of a few media titans.

Centre stage in this new business drama is pay-TV, still in its infancy in Germany. Currently, only one channel, Premiere, is run on subscription. By the end of this year, however, there could be more than 50 pay-TV channels on offer.

The key players are Munich-based Kirch Group, which has its roots in programme distribution, and the media giant Bertelsmann, already pitted against each other in the terrestrial free-to-air market where Bertelsmann is a dominant shareholder in RTL, Germany's

biggest commercial channel, and Kirch controls the number two channel, Sat-1.

This conflict has now spread into pay-TV where, ironically, the companies have in the past worked together through Premiere, in which both hold stakes.

In March, Bertelsmann announced an alliance with Rupert Murdoch's B-Sky-B and Canal Plus of France to establish a pay-TV company in Germany, provisionally called NewCo. Meanwhile, Kirch has signed a long-term distribution deal with the American media companies Viacom and Paramount to supply programming for its pay-TV ventures.

The battle might well be decided by something more modest — a black box. For viewers to watch programmes on either of the proposed networks they will need a set-top decoder.

To develop this, MMBG, a consortium of the major German television companies, was set up last year to estab-

lish an industry-standard system. Bertelsmann readily joined up, but Kirch dragged its feet.

Then early this year Kirch announced it would not be joining MMBG but would instead develop its own decoder, through an alliance with Metro, Europe's largest retailing group, and Veacom, a subsidiary of the utility giant Veba.

And it said it would be launching its "d-box" decoder this summer, several months ahead of MMBG's rival system.

So far, Bertelsmann has not responded to Kirch's pre-emptive strike. Officially, the company says that, while Kirch may launch first, MMBG has the better technology. But quality may not be enough.

Events in Germany bear obvious similarities to the early battle between Sky and BS in Britain. Both came to the market with different receiver technologies, but it quickly became apparent that there was room for only one.

# Banker resorts to metaphysics

**K**evin Rafferty in Sofia

THE European Bank for Reconstruction and Development duly won a new lease of life in Sofia this week with the doubling of its capital to 20 billion euros (£16.5 billion). But the unanswered question was whether the bank's president, Jacques de Larosière, would get his own new lease when his first term ends next year.

Lamberto Dini, Italian prime minister — at least until tomorrow — and chairman of the government, said he would be the first to back Mr de Larosière for a new term.

The bank president invoked metaphysics to duck the question of whether he would stay on. "God, namely my existence on this planet, the shareholders, and my own view of the matter."

Mr de Larosière has put an end to virtually all the soul-searching about whether there is a need for the EBRD.

"The progress of the bank has been outstanding," declared Mr Dini, who praised the number of loans and operations agreed upon, the quality of the projects, the amount of equity participation, the

# Spring power of flower

**J**OHN GLOVER in Genoa witnesses the passion as Euroflora blooms

**A**GARDENER in this municipal overalls surveys two of his colleagues taking souvenir photos of each other in the classic, renaissance-style Italian garden they have just finished setting up. Employed by the Florence council parks department, they and their garden left home last Monday. They have been working on it ever since.

"It's tradition, passion," he says in a soft Tuscan accent. "For us there's no return on it."

He points down the hall to where other gardeners are shooting at each other in

French as they put the finishing touches to what turns out to be one of Mickey Mouse's ears. "They might get a return in image. But really, it's passion," he says.

They are from Disneyland Paris. On their stand, water sprays a couple of metres into the air from fake, moss-covered tree stumps, each spout accompanied by Donald Duck quacking noises. The centrepiece of the Disneyland show is a huge floral representation of Mickey wearing a wizard's hat. Late on Thursday evening, it is beginning to take shape.

Euroflora, a giant exhibition of flowers, plants and garden accoutrements which opens here today, is no ordinary flower show. It sprawls over 150,000 square metres of the Genoa Fiera (exhibition centre), enough rolled-up lawn to cover two football fields and hides the 15,000 tons of sand

and soil used to create the stands; and it took 4,000 workers and gardeners to prepare it.

The exhibits cover the full spectrum of the plant world, from tiny bonasols to a 14-metre high American oak.

After two years in the doldrums as recession-struck consumers pruned spending on luxuries, the flower business is blossoming once again.

It started sprouting internationally in the mid-eighties. Since 1985, Holland, which leads the flower world, has raised its production 67 per cent, followed by Germany (up 26 per cent), France and Italy, which grew their industries by 26 and 23 per cent respectively.

The developing world is also starting to say it with flowers. For the first time, this year's Euroflora — it is held only once every five years — has stands from Cameroon, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Russia and Lithuania, alongside the traditional exhibitors from western Europe and the Americas.

French MPs are threatening to use economic flower power in an attempt to persuade the Dutch to end liberal policies on drugs and back up a personal campaign by President Jacques Chirac, writes Paul Webster in Paris.

A No Tulips from Amsterdam petition has been drawn up by a lobby of Gaullist MPs. They believe that a boycott of Dutch flowers and bulbs would be more effective than the present French reaction, which includes Paris's refusal to extend EU open-frontier agreements to visitors from Holland.

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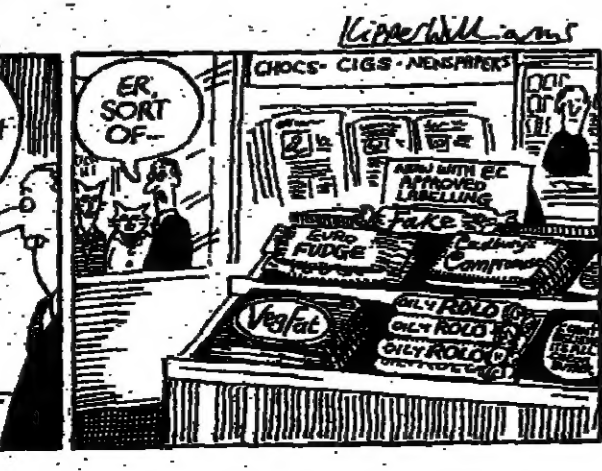
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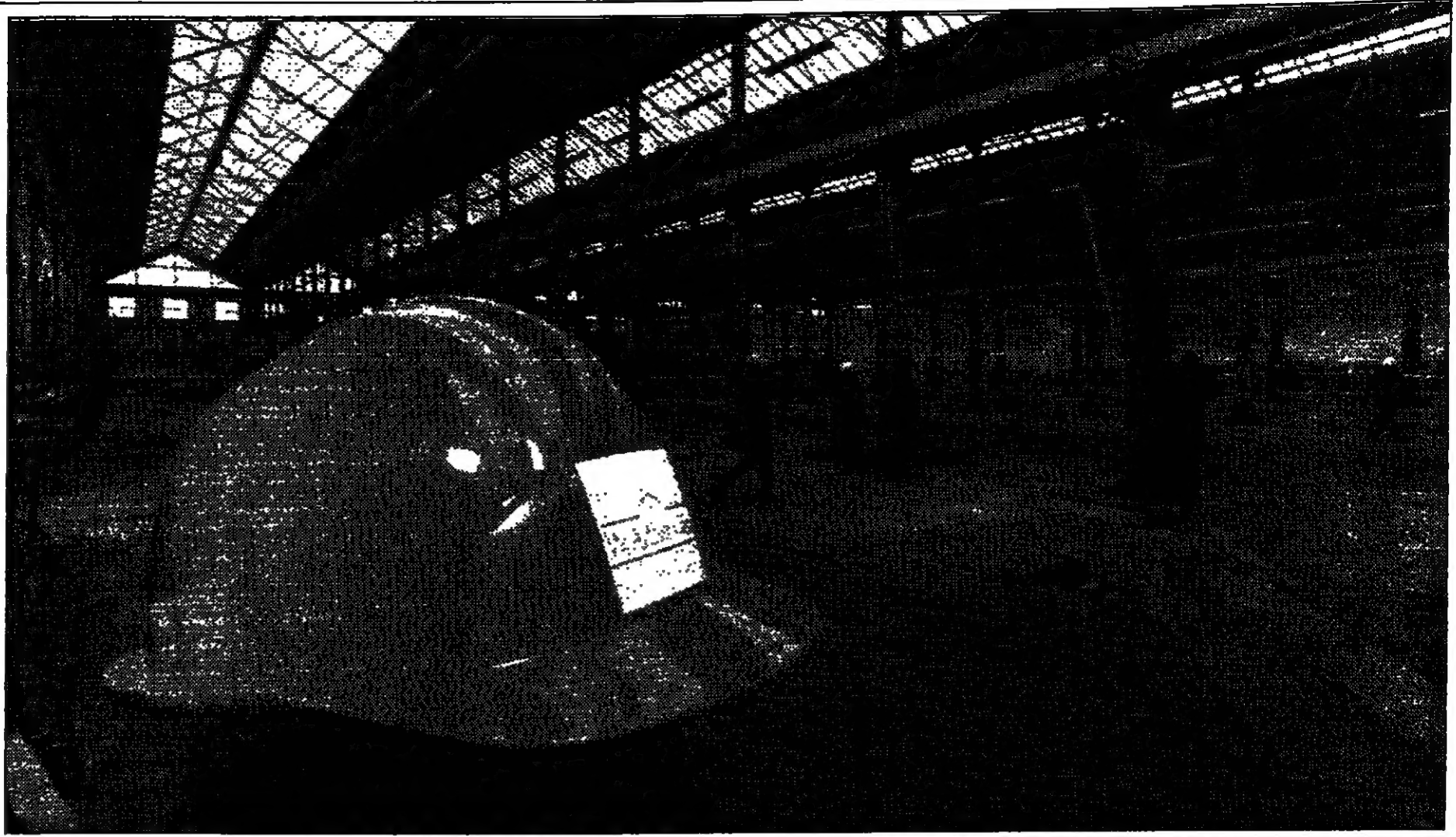


Financial Editor: Alex Brummer  
Telephone: 0171-239-9610  
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# Finance Guardian

**Britain loves shops — the investing, the building and the spending. ROGER COWE visits Swindon, the former railway town cashing in on the latest leisure craze**

## Loco at the sales



Heritage industry... Builders converting the Swindon foundry and boiler shop of Brunel's era into a designer mall. Below, how the food court might look PHOTOGRAPH BY GRAHAM TURNER

SWINDON has made a good list of becoming a new-age town. Never mind manufacturing, the future lies with offices, distribution centres, hi-tech bits and pieces — and shops. The conspicuous consumerism which characterised the late-1980s boom may have faded, but there is still no shortage of eager shoppers ready to get into their cars and dip into their wallets or purses.

Indeed, there will be more new out-of-town shopping space opened in the 1990s than in the consumerist eighties. And spending money, even if you haven't got it, has become so deeply ingrained in the national psyche that it has become a leisure activity — though not yet quite a sport.

Swindon, once a railway town, has taken to this with a vengeance. True, it is still home to Rover and Honda, but they are owned by the Germans and the Japanese respectively. The British invest in shops.

There is a new indoor market at one end of town, a slowly shopping precinct has been given a facelift and the town's main shopping centre — named after Isambard Kingdom Brunel — has been expanded and upgraded.

The railway sheds, where

Brunel's magnificent engines were once built, are a potent symbol of Britain's transformation from the leading industrial power of the last century to a rather downmarket shopping arcade and lottery-financed heritage centre.

On Wednesday, work began on converting the foundry and the boiler shop into another shopping centre. It will not be merely one more tawdry mall, with its familiar array of department stores, clothing and shoe shops. This centre will sell the products which those shops cannot sell — ends of ranges, last year's fashions, colours which proved unpopular, odd sizes — at bargain prices.

The "Great Western designer outlet village" has been named in honour of Brunel's Great Western Railway, which is being flogged off at a knock-down price to a public conditioned to expect a bargain. It is part of what has been christened the Churchward redevelopment.

George Jackson Churchward was the locomotive, carriage and wagon superintendent of the GWR early this century. He is credited with the heavy investment in lathes, milling, drilling and other machinery which made the works such a success — the kind of investment which might have stemmed Britain's

manufacturing decline had it been maintained throughout the economy.

The legacy of Brunel and Churchward has been empty for 10 years since the site finally closed. A few bits of machinery lie here and there in the windswept shells of the dusty buildings where, until this week, only rattling shutters disturbed the pigeons.

The site was bought in 1987 by Tarmac, which expected to make a quick profit with a classic piece of 1980s opportunism. But it was too late to cash in on the redevelopment boom, and Grade II listing of the industrial buildings has since complicated the task of finding an alternative. Now a joint venture between US developer McArthur Glen and airports operator BAA will transform it within a year into an "outlet centre".

This is an American concept and, like the notion of self-service supermarket shopping in the 1950s, it is catching on fast in the UK. BAA McArthur Glen opened its first centre, Cheshire Oaks, outside Chester last spring. It plans more, at Mansfield, then Bridgend and possibly York and two in Scotland. Other developers have opened centres at Bicester, Horseshoe and Doncaster, and Clarks has used redundant shoe factory

buildings in Street, Somerset.

The idea of a US-style shopping mall is familiar in the UK, after the rash of regional centres like Galeshead's Metro Centre, Lakeside at Thurrock and Sheffield's Meadowhall.

But the idea of malls dealing in what are effectively "sale" goods is harder to grasp, and made more difficult by their description as "factory outlet centres", with its connotation of factory shops cutting out the middleman.

Most of the names in these places, from Ralph Lauren to Benetton, are familiar from the high street, not the industrial estate. Typically sited near motorway junctions, outlet centres lure people to make an average 35-mile journey with the promise of knock-down prices on brand names ranging from Nike and Levi's to Liz Claiborne and Jaeger.

BAA McArthur Glen chief executive Joey Kaempfer says prices are supposed, on average, to be 30 per cent below those in the high street. Of course, that is not 30 per cent below what the same products would go for in the sales.

For retailers, outlet centres provide a way of getting rid of unsold stock without compromising the business of the main chains in the kind of permanent sale of the late 1980s. Mr Kaempfer says: "Prime locations are just too expensive not to be selling at prime prices most of the time."

A key element of the recovery strategy of Burton Group has been to increase the number of weeks which its shops sell at prime prices.

Using shops in outlet centres helps. Richard Maney, managing director of Burton's Principles chain, explains: "They serve a distinct purpose in allowing us to sell end of sea-

son lines. It's a real saving to the customer without affecting our prime selling time."

There is one fly in the economic ointment — the equation for developers. Retailers expect to pay less rent for a shop where they are selling at lower prices. Which means that the sites' developers and managers cannot afford to spend as much as at a conventional shopping centre.

That has led to the concept of a tacky image in the US, although Mr Kaempfer says the square is circled partly by having a low fixed rental, with BAA McArthur Glen taking a share of shops' turnover. That is the model BAA uses in its airport retail malls, and why the company was interested in extending its retail management experience in this way.

But Swindon's centre is about more than shopping. It is part of "Heritage Britain". Outlet centres offer not just a place to buy a new dress or a pair of trainers, but somewhere to go for the day — an

alternative to the theme park or the stately home. Clarks Village, opened by the footwear manufacturer at Street in Somerset, includes a shoe museum and has become a top tourist attraction.

The Great Western village will be littered with railway memorabilia and National Lottery Heritage Fund permitting, the site will also include what Thamesdown council's leisure officer John Fisher describes as "a ground-breaking heritage centre". In other words, a railway museum recreating the scale, noise and smell of the works, using "state-of-the-art display and interactive techniques".

This kind of approach helps to persuade local authorities that a centre will not merely compete with existing retailers, but will bring new shoppers into the area.

That doesn't mean everyone is happy, however. Despite assertions that Cheshire Oaks has brought new business to the heart of Chester, city centre businesses are less than

ecstatic. Bob Clough-Parker, secretary of the Chamber of Trade and Commerce, says: "It is to be welcomed if it means that people visit as part of a broader stay in Chester."

His emphasis on the "if" betrays his doubts. "They are setting out their stall to be a visitor tourist attraction. That represents a threat to a city centre even as economically buoyant as Chester. It means livelihoods, jobs and businesses are on the line."

At Swindon, council leader Sue Bates does not believe the Great Western village will take business away from the town centre. "It will complement the town centre. I see it as attracting day traffic."

Of course, it will help to overcome the dereliction of the huge site, as well as bringing jobs — 400 while construction is under way, 700 when open next year. That is a far cry from the 14,000 who once made trains here, but it is better than nothing. And, who knows, some of the visitors might come by train.

### How GWR hit the buffers

THE Great Western Railway directors decided in 1840 to build "the greatest locomotive works in the world" at Swindon, which became the hub of the GWR.

Construction of the first engine, The Great Western, began in 1846 and in 1868 a carriage and wagon works was added. Eventually the 140-acre site encompassed the manufacture of everything railwayways. One shop made artificial limbs for workers who lost arms and legs in terrible conditions.

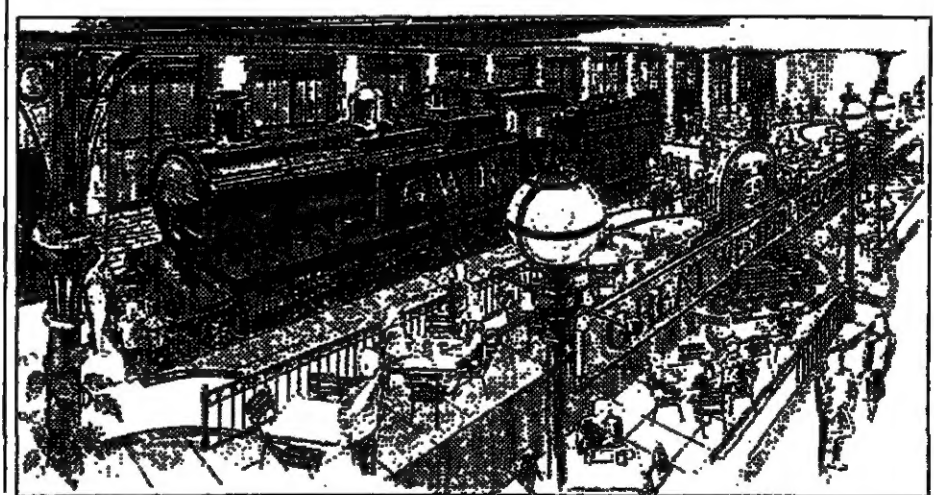
A small market town was transformed, an indigenous population of 2,000 dwarfed by employees in the new town, for whom the firm built housing.

When the works opened it employed 1,500 people — more than twice as many as would find jobs in the Great Western Village. By the first world war, employment had reached 14,000, a quarter of Swindon's population.

At its peak, in the 1930s, the works rolled out two new engines a week and repaired 10 times that number, 4,000 new wagons were produced each year.

The end of steam marked the beginning of the decline. The last steam locomotive, Evening Star, was "out-shopped" in 1960 and a couple of years later the carriage and wagon works were closed. Output dwindled and the factory was abandoned in 1986.

Extracted from *Return to Swindon*, by Tim Bryan, published by Acon-Anglia



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## 20

Lisa Buckingham

WE HAVE all seen them, the foot-stomping toddlers who simply have to have that bottle of Fireman Sam bubble bath or the bag of crisps loudly promising a Tazo.

But this is just the type of behaviour to set the pulse of advertisers racing. Indeed, there is a fair chance that cameras hidden by leading advertising agencies will have captured you capitulating to the aisle-by-aisle blackmail which is such a routine part of the Saturday morning shop.

Far from the discussions which are underway or have taken place on the Continent about the ethics of advertising to children, British promoters relish getting stuck in to this potentially huge market.

Advertising agency J Walker Thompson this month devotes its entire *Vantage* magazine to the tapping of the kids' market. Pocket money may average only £2.70 a week, but with presents and earnings children are estimated to have a collective disposable income of £1.1 billion a year.

Far more potently, however, JWT quotes the Henley

Centre forecasting group as calculating that kids have influence over another £8.4 billion, so that all in all a stunning £10 billion a year is spent more or less at the behest of youngsters.

If you accept GMTV's proposition that children of just two and three watch more than an hour of TV a week, and that they are three times better than adults at advertising recall, it is little wonder so many parents are held to ransom. Five commercial satellite stations offer almost totally child-orientated programming. And the advertisement-driven ITV is reckoned to capture two-thirds of the child audience.

Worse still, it is estimated that a majority of child viewing is unaccompanied by an adult and that an (almost incredible) 77 per cent of youngsters have their own TV set.

Evidence suggests that 90 per cent of all child advertising — about £78 million a year — is spent on TV. But there is hope for all those in charge of the impressionable. ITV recorded a 10 per cent drop in young people's viewing last year. Possibly it was the competition from satellite cable and CD-Rom, or the change in the way audience figures are collated.

Hopefully, though, JWT has hit the right button with its prime suggestion: TV lost out to the long hot summer with its promise of traditional fun such as the park, paddling pool and playhouse. Kids asserted themselves and got plenty of airtime — but there were no advertisers in sight.

### Quick Crossword No. 8105

**JOE BLOGS V C**  
**PIPA OONE**  
**CEMIPED L L**  
**ME O C U T**  
**ES BAKED H B**  
**SECURE BITTER**  
**CH M V A I**  
**ADORED PARROT**  
**L O DE MON Y V**  
**ALLY F SE O**  
**Y O I L P P P R**  
**OOB L E T R**  
**R Y B E T T O T H E D**

**Solution No. 8104**

**Across**  
1 & 24 Author also known as "Doc" (7,7)  
8 Scottish region (7)  
9 Starter (7)  
10 Sooner (7)  
11 Come after (5)  
13 Inspired — vulgar (8)  
15 Incompetent (8)  
18 Crawl (6)  
21 Puffed up (7)  
22 Nourish (7)  
23 Re-use, after reconstitution (7)  
24 (see 1 across)

**Down**  
1 Indian social class (5)  
2 Gender (5)  
3 Residence of Canterbury's archbishop (7,6)

**4 Emphasise — tension (6)**  
**5 Generated by water pressure (13)**  
**6 God-like (6)**  
**7 Wreckage (6)**  
**12 Mid-day (4)**  
**14 Auction (4)**  
**15 Introduce (6)**  
**16 Option (6)**

**17 Prohibited (5)**  
**19 Escape (5)**  
**20 Push — crowd (5)**

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